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HISTORICAL ROMANCES.

THE PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

VOL. II.

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THE PAGE

OF

THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

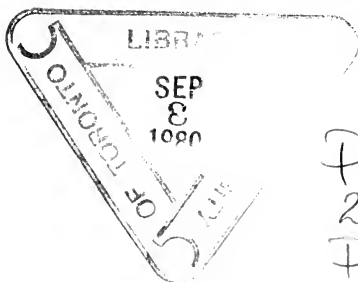
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CONTENTS.

PART II.

Continued.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ON THE DOUBLE ADVANTAGE OF SPEAKING THE PICARDY DIALECT	1
II. THE BATTLE OF ST. LAWRENCE'S DAY	26
III. HOW THE ADMIRAL GOT THE NEWS OF THE BATTLE	43
IV. THE ASSAULT	54
V. A FUGITIVE	66
VI. TWO FUGITIVES	75
VII. ADVENTURER AND CAPTAIN	82
VIII. WAITING	92
IX. THE PARISIANS	101
X. IN THE SPANISH CAMP	112
XI. IN WHICH YVONNET GATHERS ALL THE INFOR- MATION HE DESIRES	123
XII. GOD PROTECTS FRANCE	133

PART III.

I. A REMEMBRANCE AND A PROMISE	139
II. THE AMBASSADOR OF THEIR MAJESTIES THE KINGS OF FRANCE AND SPAIN	150

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. IN THE QUEEN'S APARTMENTS	159
IV. IN THE APARTMENTS OF THE FAVORITE . . .	167
V. WHERE, AFTER THE VANQUISHED HAS BEEN TREATED AS VICTOR, THE VICTOR IS TREATED AS THOUGH VANQUISHED	178
VI. THE PEDLER	187
VII. THE WEDDING DRESSES AND ORNAMENTS . .	197
VIII. WHAT PASSED AT THE CHÂTEAU DES TOUR- NELLES AND IN THE STREETS OF PARIS DUR- ING THE EARLY DAYS OF JUNE, 1559 . . .	208
IX. NEWS FROM SCOTLAND	216
X. THE JOUSTS OF THE RUE ST. ANTOINE . . .	225
XI. THE CHALLENGE	235
XII. A FIGHT WITH SHARPENED STEEL	244
XIII. THE PREDICTION	253
XIV. THE DEATHBED	267
XV. FLORENTINE POLICY	279
XVI. A KING OF FRANCE HAS BUT HIS WORD . .	291
XVII. IN WHICH THE TREATY IS EXECUTED . . .	301
XVIII. THE SEVENTEENTH OF NOVEMBER. . . .	312
XIX. THE DEAD KNOW ALL THINGS	321
XX. THE ROUTE FROM SAN REMO TO ALBENGA .	330
EPILOGUE	339

THE PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

PART II.

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE DOUBLE ADVANTAGE OF SPEAKING THE PICARDY DIALECT.

UP to the present we have directed our attention solely to those within the beleaguered town ; it is now time for us to visit the tents of its besiegers. While Coligny and his staff were making a tour of the walls, for the purpose of seeing to the means of defence of the town, another group of men, equally important, were reconnoitring its outer defences, in order to discover the best means of attack. This group consisted of Emmanuel Philibert, Count Egmont, Count Horn, Count Schwarzbouurg, Count Mansfeld, and Dukes Eric and Ernest of Brunswick.

Following the staff was another group of officers, among whom, careful of naught except the life and honor of his well-beloved Emmanuel, rode our old friend Scianca-Ferro.

By the express orders of Emmanuel, Leona had remained, with the rest of the ducal household, at Cambrai.

As the result of his reconnoissance, Emmanuel had come to the conclusion that St. Quentin, defended by

crumbling walls, and with a weakened garrison and insufficient artillery, could not hold out more than five or six days ; a message to this effect had been sent by him to Philip II., whom prudence had detained at Cambrai.

Moreover, six or seven leagues, at the most, separated the two towns ; and if Emmanuel had chosen the royal palace for Leona's residence, the reason is obvious : the necessity of communicating orally with Philip being likely to bring from time to time the generalissimo of the Spanish army to Cambrai, the latter had counted on the fact that each of these journeys which he would have to make thither would be an opportunity of seeing Leona

For her part, Leona had consented to this separation first and before all because in this life of devotion, of love, and of renunciation which she had chosen, a wish of Emmanuel's had become for her a command ; next, because this distance of six or seven leagues, although it meant of course absence, was no real ground of separation, since at the least cause of disquiet the young girl — with that freedom of action which ignorance of her sex on the part of every one, except Scianca-Ferro, had left her — would be able, in an hour and a half at the least, to be in the camp of Emmanuel Philibert.

In addition to this, since the beginning of the campaign, Emmanuel, whatever joy the resumption of hostilities had caused him, — a resumption to which he had by the attempts made on Metz and Bordeaux at least contributed as much as the admiral by his attempt on Blois, — since the beginning of the campaign, we say, Emmanuel Philibert seemed, morally at least, to have aged ten years. A young commander of scarcely thirty-one, he found himself at the head of an army charged with the invasion of France, having under him the veteran generals of Charles V., and playing for his own fortune behind the fortune of

Spain. In truth, on the result of the campaign just begun was to depend his future, not only as a great general, but even as a sovereign prince ; it was Piedmont which he hoped to reconquer in defeating France. Emmanuel Philibert, even though he were commander-in-chief of the Spanish armies, was nevertheless only a kind of royal *condottiere* : a man is really of weight in the balance of Fate only when he has the right on his own account to cause men to be slain. Nevertheless, he had no reason to complain ; Philip II. — yielding, at least in this, to the advice which his father, Charles V., had given him at the time of his abdication — had granted, as regarded peace and war, full power to the Duke of Savoy, and had placed under his command all that long list of princes and captains whom we have named in pointing out the positions which each of them occupied round St. Quentin.

All these thoughts, then, among which that of the responsibility weighing on him was not the least, rendered Emmanuel Philibert as grave and full of care as an old man. He perfectly well understood that on the success of the siege of St. Quentin depended the success of the whole campaign. St. Quentin once taken, between this town and Paris there were but thirty leagues to cross, and Ham, La Fère, and Soissons to capture ; only, St. Quentin must be taken without delay, in order that France should not have time to raise one of those armies which seem to rise as though from the earth, in virtue of we know not what enchantment, and which as by a miracle offer their breasts, a wall of flesh, in place of the stone walls which the enemy has destroyed. Thus we have seen with what persistent rapidity Emmanuel Philibert had pressed on the siege-works, and how close a watch he had established around the town.

The duke's first idea had been that the weak side of St.

Quentin was the Porte d'Isle, and that it would be on this side that, on the least imprudence on the part of the besieged, he should capture the place. In consequence, leaving all the other generals to encamp before the wall of Rénicourt, which in a regular approach would be the most effective point of attack, he had pitched his tent on the opposite side, between a mill, which was situated on a little hill, and the river Somme. From this eminence he was able to watch the river — over which he had caused a bridge to be thrown — and all the vast tract of country stretching from the Somme as far as the old Vermand road, — a tract which was to be occupied by the English brigade as soon as it should have effected a junction with the Hispano-Flemish army.

We have seen how an attempt to carry the faubourg by a sudden attack had been repulsed. Then Emmanuel Philibert had resolved to risk an escalade. This escalade was to take place during the night of the 7th and 8th of August.

Why did Emmanuel Philibert choose this night of the 7th and 8th of August rather than any other for the execution of this attempt? This we are about to relate.

On the morning of the 6th, at the time when he was listening to the reports brought by the various chiefs of patrol, a peasant of the village of Savy who wished to speak with Emmanuel had been ushered into his tent. The duke, knowing that no information is to be disdained by a military chief, had directed that whoever should ask to see him was on the instant to be admitted to his presence.

The peasant had then waited only the time necessary for Emmanuel to hear the end of the reports. He brought to the general of the Spanish army a letter which he had

found in a soldier's doublet. As to the doublet, that he had found under his wife's bed. The letter was the one which the admiral had written, in duplicate, to the constable. The doublet belonged to Maldent.

Now, how is it that Maldent's doublet was found under the bed of a peasant's wife of the village of Savy? This we cannot help relating, the destiny of States often hanging on threads lighter than gossamer.

After having left Yvonnnet, Maldent had continued his journey. Arrived at Savy, he found himself, at a street turning, in presence of a night patrol. Flight was impossible, as he had been seen, and it would rouse suspicion; moreover, two or three troopers, by putting their horses to a gallop, would easily have caught him. He threw himself therefore into a doorway.

"Who goes there?" cried a voice.

Maldent was well acquainted with Picard customs; he knew that it was rare indeed that peasants locked their doors. He therefore pressed the latch, which yielded, and the door opened.

"Is it you, my poor fellow?" asked a woman's voice.

"Yes, it is I," answered Maldent, who spoke the dialect of Picardy in all its purity, being a native of Noyon, one of the chief towns of that province.

"Ah!" said the woman, "I thought you were dead."

"Good!" said Maldent; "you will soon see that I am alive;" and locking the door, he approached the bed.

Rapidly as Maldent had disappeared into the house, a trooper had nevertheless seen him disappear, but without being able to say exactly through which door. Now, as this man might be a spy following the patrol, the trooper, with three or four of his comrades, knocked at the door of a neighboring house, thereby showing a diligence which satisfied Maldent that he had no time to lose.

But Maldent, not knowing where he was, rushed headlong against a table covered with pots and glasses.

"What's the matter, then?" asked the woman, frightened.

"I stumbled against the table," said Maldent.

"I should think you were old enough not to be so stupid," murmured the woman.

Notwithstanding the lack of courtesy in the last remark, the adventurer contented himself with muttering a few tender words, and flinging off his clothes, approached the bed. He did not doubt that the troopers would soon knock at the door which had just opened for him, as they had already knocked at the next door; and he was therefore very anxious that he should not be taken for a stranger in the house. Now, the best means of not being recognized as a stranger in the house was to occupy the place of its master.

Maldent's habit of depriving others of their goods doubtless made it easy for him to divest himself of his clothes; in a trice they were on the ground; he kicked them under the bed, raised the coverlet, and buried himself immediately beneath it.

But it was not enough that Maldent should be regarded by strangers as the master of the house, it was also necessary that the sharp-tongued woman who had addressed him so rudely on account of his awkwardness should not be able to say that he was not the master; so, recommending his soul to God, and without knowing with whom he had to deal, he hastened to prove to his hostess, young or old, that he was not dead, as she had believed, or rather as she had pretended to believe. This was a way of showing his ability, as M. d'Hozier would have said, which was very pleasing to the good lady; so that she was the first to complain of being disturbed when,

after having visited the neighboring house, — occupied only by an old woman of sixty and a little girl of nine or ten, — the troopers, who were anxious to know who the man was of whom they had caught a glimpse, and who had been so quick to disappear, came knocking at the door of the house which Maldent had really entered.

“Ah, *mon Dieu* !” said the woman ; “who is there, Gosseu ?”

“Good !” said Maldent to himself ; “it appears that my name is Gosseu, — that is as well to know.” Then, aloud to his hostess : “What is the matter ? Go and see for yourself.”

“But, *Jarnidieu* ! they are going to break down the door,” cried the woman.

“All right, let them break it down,” answered Maldent ; and without troubling himself about the soldiers, the adventurer began again, where the conversation had interrupted him, in such a way that when the door yielded to the kicking of the troopers, no one — and for a time his hostess less than any one — had the right to contest with him the title of master of the house.

The soldiers entered, swearing, cursing, and blaspheming ; but as they swore, cursed, and blasphemed in Spanish, and as Maldent answered them in Picard, the conversation soon became so confused that the troopers judged it advisable to light a candle, in order that they could at least see, if they did not understand.

This was the critical moment ; so while a trooper struck a light, Maldent deemed it wise to explain, in two words, the situation to his hostess.

It must be said, to the honor of the lady, that her first idea was not to enter into the plot.

“Ah !” cried she, “you are not my poor Gosseu ? Get out of here quickly, *grand Dieu* !”

"Good!" said Maldent; "I am Gosseu, since I am in his bed."

It appeared that the argument seemed conclusive to the hostess, for she insisted no more; and after having, by the light of the candle which had just been kindled, cast a rapid glance at her improvised husband, she murmured, —

"Mercy to all sinners! 'Thou desirest not the death of a sinner,' as the Gospel of Our Lord says;" and she turned her face to the wall.

Maldent took advantage of the light which had just been made, to look around him in his turn. He was in the house of a peasant in easy circumstances; there was an oak table, walnut cupboard, serge curtains; on a chair, all ready, lay the complete Sunday clothes which, thanks to the care of the housewife, the real Gosseu expected to find on his return.

The troopers, on their part, looked with an eye not less quick and not less observing; and as nothing in the world could rouse their suspicions with regard to Maldent, they began to talk to one another in Spanish, but without using any threats, — which Maldent would easily have recognized, even though he had not understood Spanish better than he understood Picard. The troopers were simply discussing the advisability of taking him for guide, they being afraid of losing themselves in the journey from Savy to Dallon.

Seeing that he ran no other danger, and that even this danger gave him every chance of escaping, Maldent took a high tone in the conversation.

"Now, gentlemen," said he, "don't let your tongues rust in your mouths. Say at once what you want."

Then the sergeant, who spoke a little more French than the others, almost understanding what Maldent had just

said, drew near to the bed, and made him comprehend that he should first of all get up.

But Maldent shook his head. "I cannot," said he.

"What! you cannot?" said the sergeant.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because in passing by La Bourbatrie I contrived to tumble into the quarry, and have sprained my leg;" and Maldent, by the action of his shoulders and his elbows, pretended to be lame.

"Very well," said the sergeant, "in that case we will give you a horse."

"Oh!" answered Maldent, "thanks! I can ride neither horse nor donkey."

"Then you shall learn," said the sergeant.

"No, no, no," said Maldent, shaking his head more and more vehemently; "I cannot ride a horse."

"Oh! you can't ride a horse," said the Spaniard, approaching Maldent and raising his whip; "we'll see."

"All right, I'll try to ride one," said Maldent, throwing himself out of the bed, and hopping on one foot, as if he were not able to stand on the other.

"Very well," said the Spaniard; "now dress yourself quickly."

"Good, good!" said Maldent; "but do not make so much noise, for fear lest you wake my poor Catherine, who is quite feverish, because she is cutting a big tooth. Sleep, my poor Catherine, sleep!" And Maldent, still hopping on one foot, threw the coverlet over the head of "Catherine," who thought she could not do better than pretend to be asleep.

As to Maldent, he had an object in covering Catherine's head with the bedclothes; he had looked wistfully at the brand-new suit of Maître Gosseu on the chair, and he

had the not very charitable idea of appropriating it, and leaving in its stead the ragged soldier's coat which he had carefully pushed under the bed. He found in this exchange a double advantage : first, he had new breeches and a new doublet instead of an old doublet and old breeches ; and next, he was dressed as a peasant instead of as a soldier, — which would render the remainder of his journey easier of accomplishment. He began then to put on the Sunday clothes of poor Gosseu as tranquilly as though he had been measured for them himself, and as though he had paid for them out of his own purse.

We can easily understand, too, that Catherine troubled herself very little about seeing what was going on ; she asked only one thing, — that her pretended husband should depart, and as quickly as possible. On the other hand, Maldent, who feared every moment to see the real Gosseu appear on the doorstep, made as much haste as possible. Even the troopers, anxious to get to Dallon, helped Maldent to dress himself in Gosseu's finery. In ten minutes the affair was finished. It seemed a miracle how well Gosseu's clothes fitted Maldent.

Once dressed, Maldent took the candle, under pretext of seeking his hat ; but stumbling over a stool, he let the candle fall, and it went out.

" Ah ! " said he, grumbling to himself, " there is nothing more stupid in the world than a peasant who has no sense ; " and he added in a lower voice, for his own satisfaction, " With the exception, however, of a soldier who believes he has a superabundance of it. " After which, in a whining tone, " Good-by, my poor Catherine, " said he, " I am off ; " and leaning on the arm of a soldier, the pretended Gosseu departed, limping as he went.

At the door he found a horse in readiness. There was much ado to get Maldent on its back ; he called loudly

for a donkey, and three men had to hold him up until he could get into the saddle. Once there things went even worse. No sooner did the horse begin to trot than Maldent uttered most mournful cries, clinging piteously to the saddle-bow, and dragging the bridle so hard that the poor horse, confused, did all he could to rid himself of so troublesome a rider. The result was that suddenly, at the corner of a street, the horse set off at a rapid gallop, urged thereto by a cut from the sergeant's whip; while at the same time his rider gave him the reins and plunged the spurs into his sides.

Maldent shouted with all his might for help; but before any one would have had time to reach him, both horse and rider were out of sight.

The comedy had been so well played that it was not till even the sound of the horse's footsteps had ceased that the Spaniards began to understand that they were the dupes of their proposed guide, who certainly had guided them but a very short time.

Now our readers can understand how it was that Maldent arrived at La Fére on a trooper's horse and attired in a peasant's coat, and in consequence of the want of agreement between his horse and his dress, had nearly been imprisoned, hanged, or broken on the wheel.

We must now explain how Coligny's letter fell into Emmanuel Philibert's hands,—which will be easier to relate, and will not take so long a time, as Maldent's adventure.

Two hours after the departure of the pretended Gosseu the true Gosseu returned home, where he found the village in an uproar and his wife in tears. Poor "Catherine" was telling everybody how a brigand had entered the house, in consequence of her imprudence in not fastening the door while waiting for her husband, and, pistol

in hand, had compelled her to give up to him Gosseu's clothes, — which doubtless the scoundrel needed for the purpose of baffling justice ; for any man capable of offering violence to a poor woman could but be a criminal. Then, great as was the anger of the true Gosseu at being so impudently robbed of his brand-new toggery, he could not help consoling his wife when he saw her in such trouble ; then the happy idea occurred to him that by rummaging in the pockets of the rags left in the place of his fine new duds, perhaps he might find something that would give information in regard to the rascally thief. Thus he had found the letter addressed by the admiral to his uncle, Monsieur de Montmorency, which had been left, forgotten, by Maldent in his doublet, — though Maldent troubled himself very little about its loss, since he knew it by heart, and was ready to repeat orally to the constable all that it contained. We have seen, however, that the want of this letter had been nearly fatal to him.

The first thought of the true Gosseu, a good fellow at heart, had been to take the letter where it was directed ; but he reflected that if he fulfilled the commissions which the thief had neglected, instead of punishing him he was doing him a service ; and hate, a bad counsellor, inspired him with the idea of carrying it to Emmanuel Philibert, — that is to say, to the constable's enemy. In this way the messenger would not have the pleasure of seeing his mission fulfilled ; but, on the contrary, he would perhaps be flogged, or imprisoned, or even shot, under the suspicion that would occur to the constable that he had been betrayed.

To do Gosseu justice, he hesitated some time between these two alternatives ; but, as if he had known the axiom which three centuries later Monsieur de Talley-

rand was to formulate, he struggled victoriously against the first, which was the good one, and had the glory of yielding to the second, which was less honorable. In consequence, as soon as day broke, he set off, notwithstanding the prayers of his wife, who was tender-hearted enough to beseech her husband not to punish the rascal, saying, —

“Come, Catherine, don’t bother me any more about those rags. No, my mind is made up that he shall hang; and he shall too! D—n the fellow!” And keeping to his resolution, the headstrong Picard took sure means of conveying the letter to Emmanuel Philibert, who made no scruple of course of opening it, and who saw in it the route traced by Monsieur de Coligny to the constable for the reinforcement which he begged might be sent him.

Emmanuel Philibert liberally rewarded Gosseu, and sent him home with a promise that he should be amply revenged.

Nevertheless, as long as daylight lasted, the Duke of Savoy made no demonstration which would lead one to suppose that he had divined the constable’s plan; but deeming it improbable that the admiral would have contented himself with sending a single messenger to his uncle, and that the uncle must have received two or three messages at least, when the evening was come he despatched fifty pioneers and caused trenches to be dug, flanked by barricades, in the roads between Savy and Ham, in the valleys of St. Phal and of Rancourt. In these trenches he planted his best Spanish arquebusiers as an ambuscade.

The night passed without anything happening worthy of note; at which Emmanuel Philibert was not surprised, thinking that the constable needed time to make his dispositions, and that the “play,” as the admiral said,

would be for the morrow. So the next evening the Spanish arquebusiers were again at their post.

But it was not enough to prevent the arrival of succor in the town. Emmanuel Philibert had divined that to facilitate the entrance of the French into St. Quentin, the whole garrison would repair to the faubourg of Ponthoille, thereby greatly weakening the other positions ; that the rampart of Vieux-Marché, not having been threatened by the fire of the Flemish batteries for two days, would be almost entirely denuded of men, — a matter of the greatest consequence, — and he had consequently directed that a surprise should be attempted that very night.

We have seen how the chance which led Yvonnet on account of his private affairs, followed by the two Scharfensteins, to the rampart of Vieux-Marché, had caused the failure of this surprise. But as a compensation, at the same time that the surprise failed, the ambuscade succeeded, — and cruelly for the besieged, whose last hope sank when the news of this success reached them. Thrice did Dandelot, returning to the charge, endeavor to leap the wall of fire which intervened between him and the town ; thrice was he repulsed, — for the besieged dared not, in the night, ignorant as they were of the dispositions taken by the Duke of Savoy, sally forth from the town to his assistance. At last, seriously weakened by the Spaniards' fire, the three or four thousand men under Dandelot's command fled to the plain ; and with only five or six hundred the next day, the 8th of August, their leader rejoined the constable, to whom he gave an account of his defeat, and who, after having grumblingly listened, swore that since the Spaniards compelled him to play, he would teach them a trick that would surprise them.

From this moment, then, the constable determined to carry in person, and with the whole of his army, — which, however, was not equal in number to a sixth of the Spanish force, — relief of both men and provisions to the town of St. Quentin.

The next morning the besieged were overwhelmed with grief when they learned this double news, — of the surprise which they had escaped, and of the ambuscade, where the relief party, under the command of the brother of the admiral, had been defeated. In consequence of this they were compelled to rely on their own resources alone; and we have seen how terribly reduced these resources were.

At three o'clock in the morning of the next day Maldent returned to St. Quentin. After being exculpated by Dandelot from any blame attaching to his conduct, he got back to the town the best way he could, and arrived, by the old Vermand road, at the gate of Ponthoille. The last message of Dandelot — a message delivered purposely, that it should be repeated to his brother — implored the besieged not to despair, and announced that if the admiral could find any means possible of revictualling the town, he would inform them by Maldent. This was a promise, but a promise too vague on which to found any hope. When on the morrow he laid before the municipality a statement of the exact state of affairs, which was more than grave, Coligny deemed it wise not to say a single word about it. The townsmen, as Coligny says in his Memoirs, began by expressing great astonishment; but they soon recovered themselves, and the admiral, with their aid, was able to take fresh measures. Many of the poorer families of the surrounding country, through fear of pillage, — in which the Spaniards had the reputation of excelling, — had betaken themselves into the town, car-

rying thither everything which they regarded as of value. Among those who had begged this hospitality at St. Quentin were two noblemen accustomed to war, the lords of Caulaincourt and of Amerval. Coligny summoned them to headquarters, and invited each of them to plant a banner in the square in front of the Hôtel de Ville, and do what they could to raise recruits, promising each recruit a gratuity of a crown, and a quarter of their pay in advance. The two noblemen accepted the proposal; each one planted a banner in the square, and in four or five hours they had enlisted two hundred and twenty men, who were, as Coligny himself avows, well enough armed, and in as good condition as circumstances would admit.

The admiral reviewed them that same evening, and paid them the gratuity and their pay in advance. Then, as he deemed the time had arrived for rigorous measures, and as the scanty supply of provisions which the town contained compelled him to banish from it all useless persons, he caused it to be proclaimed by the sound of trumpet that all men or women not belonging to St. Quentin, and who had fled thither from the surrounding villages, should be enrolled for work on the fortifications, under pain of being whipped through the public thoroughfares the first time they were found delinquent, and of being hanged the second; "unless they preferred," added the proclamation, "to repair, an hour before dark, to the Ham gate, which would be opened for them, in order that they should be able to withdraw."

Unfortunately for these poor persons, of whom the greater part preferred retreat to labor, during the day the sound of beating drums and of trumpets was heard, and a new army, dressed in blue, was seen approaching from the direction of Cambrai. This was the English contingent, twelve thousand strong, which had just effected

a junction with the Duke of Savoy, and which occupied the position reserved for it. Two hours after, this force completed the blockade of the town, masking its fourth face, and extending from the Faubourg d'Isle as far as Florimont. The three generals who were in command were Pembroke, Clinson, and Grey. With this contingent were twenty-five cannon,—in itself double what the admiral had to distribute over all the fortifications of the town.

From the walls the inhabitants beheld with consternation the arrival of this third army; but the admiral said, as he passed through the crowd, —

“Come, brave citizens of St. Quentin, courage! You cannot surely think that I have come among you, and that I have brought with me so many good men and true, for the mere pleasure of surrendering? Now, even though we were compelled to rely on ourselves alone, by my faith, your fortitude aiding us, I hold the garrison adequate to defend us against our enemies!”

And, the courage of the townspeople rising, their eyes sparkled, and they said one to another, —

“Well, then, let us take courage! Nothing worse can happen to us than to the admiral; and since he is answerable for everything, let us rely on his word.”

But it was quite different with the poor peasants who did not belong to the town, and who, not caring to run the risk of working under the enemy's fire, had made preparations for leaving the town; the arrival of the English force had just closed its gates for them, and, of the two dangers, many decided to face that which the work of repairing the walls offered. Others, however, persisted in their desire of quitting the town, and were put outside the Ham Gate; of these there were more than seven hundred. For twenty-four hours these unfortunates lay in

the ditches, not daring to venture within the English and Spanish lines ; but hunger at length compelled them, and on the evening of the second day they were seen advancing, two by two, downcast, wringing their hands, toward the enemy's camp.

The besieged shuddered as they saw these unfortunates surrounded, like a flock of sheep, by the English or Spanish soldiers, driven into the camp with blows from pike-handles, and in vain crying for mercy. Every one about the admiral wept. " But," he said, " it is so much relief ; for I should have been compelled either to feed them or let them die of hunger."

That evening Coligny held a council with the inhabitants of St. Quentin. Now that the town was entirely surrounded, it was a question of finding means by which the constable might make a new attempt at succoring it. The only way left was to cross the Somme by the marshes at Grosnard. These were very dangerous on account of their peat-bogs and holes ; but some of the inhabitants accustomed to hunting over those, which were judged to be impassable, declared that if fifty men laden with fascines were intrusted to them, they would that same night attempt to make a causeway ten feet wide through the marsh, and thus reach the Somme. As to the left bank of the river, there was no reason for disquiet there, that being passable.

The admiral directed Maldent to accompany the pioneers. He gave him a letter for the constable, in which a plan of the neighborhood was traced, showing where the embarkation was to be effected ; only, he recommended the constable to provide flat-bottomed boats, since he (the admiral) had but four boats fit for use, the largest of which held at most four men. If the causeway should be finished in the night, Maldent was to swim across the

Somme and to repair to the constable ; if the reply were urgent, he was to return the same way.

At two o'clock in the morning hunters and pioneers returned, announcing that a path had been made, over which six men abreast could pass with safety. The work had been completed without the enemy's knowledge ; the engineers who had examined these marshes for the Duke of Savoy having reported that for any body of troops whatever to attempt to cross them would be the height of folly. Maldent succeeded in swimming the river, and went across country to La Fère.

Things were going, then, on this side, as well as could be expected ; and although there was only a feeble hope, yet it was well to encourage it.

At break of day the admiral ascended the spire of the collegiate church ; it was the 9th of August. From this lofty position he had a view of the triple camp of the enemy, together with their siege-works. Coligny had not visited this church-tower for forty-eight hours ; and he now saw that the Spaniards had made terrible progress in their operations, and from the large heaps of fresh earth which rose on the Rémicourt side that their pioneers were still at work. The admiral forthwith sent for an excellent English miner named Lauxfort, and asked him what he thought of the works which the enemy was erecting. Lauxfort was of opinion that they indicated the enemy's intention of mining ; but he reassured the admiral by telling him that during the last two or three days he had fortunately begun a countermine, whose prospects were so good that he would undertake to see that the work that was causing the admiral such disquiet should fail of its object.

But the Spaniards were not content with mining ; they were at the same time carrying on works which were not

less disquieting, — namely, digging trenches ; and these trenches — slowly, it is true, but without opposition — were nearing the town. These, three in number, threatened the fortifications at Rémicourt, toward which they were being constructed in echelons, — one in front of the Tour à l'Eau, the second before the Rémicourt Gate, and the third facing the Tour Rouge.

The admiral could not effectively oppose these trenches ; men were lacking to make sorties in order to destroy them, and arquebusiers to support and cover the retreat of the force engaged. For, as we have seen, he had with his new recruits scarcely six or seven hundred men, and by mustering all arms he could raise only some forty arquebusiers ; so that, as he says himself, he had “no means of preventing the construction of these works, for which he was very sorry.” All that the admiral could do, then, was to repair the damage done by the Spaniards as fast as they did it.

But soon even this became impossible. During the 9th of August the thunder of a new battery was heard ; and this battery, which was situated on an eminence above the abbey of St. Quentin-en-Isle, and taking the fortification of Rémicourt, from the Tour à l'Eau to the Tour Rouge in flank, prevented almost all repairs on the works, for no sapper would dare expose himself to its fire. However, as the necessity for these repairs increased as the effects of the enemy's fire became more serious, the admiral began to use the stick to his men ; but seeing that this means of persuasion, so efficacious in other circumstances, was useless now, a list of sappers was drawn up, to each individual of which a crown a day was promised, together with good food. This “double inducement,” as the admiral says, induced about a hundred of the sappers to agree to help in the repairs on the fortifications.

Maldent, meanwhile, had arrived safe and sound at La Fère; and as soon as the constable learned how great was the distress at St. Quentin, and moreover that the causeway across the marshes promised to be of service in succoring the town, he resolved to repair thither himself without delay. Consequently, an hour after Maldent's arrival at La Fère, he set off at the head of two thousand horse and four thousand foot, and marched to Essigny-le-Grand, where he halted. There, after setting his army in order of battle, he sent three officers to reconnoitre the Spanish position and to find out the distance between their advance-posts and the town and the river; then with his most experienced generals he approached as near as possible to the marshes of the Somme, — that is to say, as far as the village of Gruois.

The three officers who made the reconnoissance were able to get as far as Abbiette, leaving behind them a post of Spanish arquebusiers; then, having examined the marshes of Gauchy and tried the approaches to the Somme, they returned to the constable, confirming all that Maldent had said. At the same time the latter received from the constable a letter informing Coligny that there was nothing for him to do but to hold out for a day or two longer, and that the prayed for relief would arrive sooner or later. The admiral was also advised to keep careful watch, in order that at whatever hour of the day the force should arrive, it should not be kept outside the walls. In consequence, and as in any case the relieving force must arrive from the side of Tourival, the admiral doubled his posts on that side, and had a large number of ladders carried to the sheds of the powder-magazine, so that the new-comers should be able at the same time to enter by the St. Catherine Gate and mount by the walls.

The constable rejoined his army at Essigny-le-Grand

almost at the same time that Maldent re-entered St. Quentin. His resolution was to relieve the besieged town openly and in broad daylight. Darkness and craft had so ill served the enterprise the first time that he determined to call to its aid the two great auxiliaries of courage, — broad daylight and open force. He returned then to La Fère; there mustered his infantry, cavalry, and artillery, — consisting of five cannon, — and ordered the Maréchal de Saint-André, who was at Ham, to join him early on the 10th of August on the road between La Fère and St. Quentin.

After having delivered his message into the hands of Coligny, Maldent returned immediately to the tent of the adventurers, all of whom he found, with smiling faces, at their posts. Yvonnet's affairs were succeeding marvelously. Fracasso had given up the infinitive of the verb *perdre* for its past participle, which made *perdu* for him, — a rhyme to which he had found immediately in *pendu*. The two Scharfensteins had originated a means of livelihood, in a small way, which did not fail to bring them in considerable gains; they made peculiar nocturnal sorties, concealing themselves by the side of the paths which led from one camp to the other, and with a large scythe of their invention, — by which they were able to reach a distance of twelve feet, — they waited for the passers-by, who received on the nape of the neck a blow, struck either by Frantz or Heinrich, and who of course fell without making any sound. Now, as the Spaniards and the Flemish had just received their arrears of pay, together with a gratuity on entering on the campaign, the two giants drew toward them the man who was dead or had been stunned, and robbed him. If the passer-by died, of course there was an end of him; if he were only stunned, he awoke tied up like a sausage, with a gag in his mouth,

having at his side three or four companions tied up and gagged like him. Then, when it was time to go to bed, the two Scharfensteins bore on their shoulders their three or four prisoners; and however poor might be their ransoms, our Germans, who were orderly men, balanced them on the credit side of the association's ledger. Procope continued to follow his profession of unlicensed notary and of universal attorney. He could not prepare wills fast enough; consequently he had doubled his price, and would no longer prepare any except at six livres each. Lactance carried off little by little the wine-cellar of the Jacobins, which was reputed to be the best in the neighborhood, and conveyed its contents to the tent of the adventurers. Piletrousse returned with the purses which he claimed to have found trampled by horses, and the coats which he said had been left on milestones. Money affairs as well as love affairs thus went along merrily; gold flowed in from all sides, and although only in small streams, promised to become a river so large that if only the war should last a year or two, each one of our adventurers would be able to retire with a considerable fortune, and to follow in peace and in the regard of his fellow-men that natural bent which attracted him, be it love or poetry.

On the lips of all, we say, there was a smile, with the exception however of Malemort's.

Malemort was groaning ruefully; he had never groaned before in such a manner. It was not that he was growing worse, quite the contrary; but Malemort, following the Socratic precept, *Γινῶθι σεαυτόν* ("Know thyself"), had made a study, not psychological, but anatomical, of himself. He knew himself thoroughly; he felt that a crisis was at hand, and however quickly his flesh might heal, he saw clearly that it would be quite impossible for him

longer to take part in it, and by that means obtain an additional scar. Maldent, by confidentially announcing the approaching arrival of the constable, completed the despair of his companion.

It was supper-time, and the adventurers seated themselves around the table. Thanks to their thousand and one resources, their table was better stocked than that of the admiral. Above all, the wine, provided, as we have said, by Brother Lactance, was at the same time abundant and of the best quality.

After the dinner, healths were drunk. First they drank to the safe return of Maldent, to Fracasso's sonnet, which was in a fair way toward completion; to the health of Malemort, then to the king's, then to the admiral's, then to that of Mademoiselle Gudule, then, last, — let us confess it, a souvenir of Maldent, — to the health of poor Catherine Gosseu.

The two Scharfensteins alone up to the present had proposed no healths; but it must not be inferred from that that they had been idle; on the contrary, not being good at speech-making, they had been drinking, — and had drunk between them much more than the other seven. At last Heinrich rose, a brimming glass in his hand, a smile under his thick mustache, his eyes sparkling under his broad brows.

"Companions," said he, in a German accent, "I have a health to propose."

"Silence, gentlemen!" cried the adventurers. "Heinrich wishes to propose a health."

"And I too," said Frantz.

"And Frantz too," cried the adventurers.

"Pshaw!"

"What is your toast, Frantz? Speak first; the youngest has the floor."

"That which my uncle shall propose."

"Ah, bravo !" cried the adventurers ; " a dutiful nephew, as usual ! Here, Heinrich, your health ! "

" I propose the health of that virtuous young man who has come to offer us five hundred gold crowns for the little affair in question, you know." And he made the rather vulgar gesture of a man who kills a rabbit.

" Ah, yes ! " said Yvonnet, " the bastard of Waldeck. True ! We have not seen him since ; he gave us no earnest-money, and he has not told us for what day he wants our services."

" No matter," said Heinrich, " he has pledged his word, and a German's word is his bond ; he will come, he will give us the earnest-money, and he will appoint us a day."

" Thank you for answering for me, Heinrich," said a voice.

The adventurers turned, and saw a man entering the tent.

" Gentlemen," said the bastard of Waldeck, coming forward, " here are the hundred gold crowns which I promised you as earnest-money, and you are to be at my command, body and soul, for the whole of to-morrow, — or rather for to-day, for it is one o'clock in the morning."

Then, throwing a hundred gold crowns on the table, and taking up the glass which, much to his chagrin, Malemort had not emptied, he added, —

" Now, gentlemen, let us treat the proposal of the good Heinrich with the respect it deserves : let us drink to the success of the little affair." And the adventurers drank merrily to the success of what they called " the little affair," which was nothing else than Emmanuel Philibert's death.

Let us return to the constable.

CHAPTER II.

THE BATTLE OF ST. LAWRENCE'S DAY.

THE same day, — for, as the bastard of Waldeck had discreetly observed, the first hour of the 10th of August, 1557, had just struck when he proposed his toast, — the same day, toward seven o'clock in the morning, the troops of the Maréchal de Saint-André, leaving Ham under the charge of the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, effected a junction with those of the constable.

The two armies, or rather mere fractions of one army, thus united, formed in military parlance, an effective force of nine hundred men-at-arms, a thousand light horse and dragoons, fifteen companies of French and twenty-two of German infantry; the whole force numbering not more than nine or ten thousand men.¹

It was at the head of a force no larger than this, that the constable came to attack an army, the junction of the English corps with which had increased it to nearly sixty thousand men! Thus when, on the previous evening, he had, in the council of war, expressed his intention of marching, with ten thousand men, to the relief of a town besieged by sixty thousand, the Maréchal de Saint-André animadverted with some severity on the danger of any such enterprise, and enlarged on the risk to be run in encountering an enemy as vigilant as was the Duke of Savoy, especially during a retreat of six leagues across

¹ Eleven thousand according to Raoutin; eight thousand according to Mergey, who was present at the battle and was taken prisoner.

wide stretches of level land which offered no shelter. But with his usual amenity, the constable replied, —

“*Corbleu!* Monsieur, in everything which regards the welfare of the state you may rely with perfect safety on me. It is many years since I first learned when a battle is to be risked or avoided. Rest assured that all will go well.”

The constable broke up his camp during the night, hoping to be at the mill at Gauchy by four o'clock in the morning ; but it was six before he arrived there, his progress being retarded by his baggage and artillery.

Notwithstanding this delay, the Duke of Savoy was so badly served by his scouts that he was surprised by the French army suddenly appearing on the heights of Gauchy. The constable was even able to capture two companies — each numbering three hundred men — which had been thrown forward.

When the heights of Gauchy were occupied the French troops had the Spanish army in full view ; but the Somme and the marshes of Abbiette lay between the two armies, which were unable to join battle save by a causeway which led from the lower part of the Spanish encampment, and over which four men abreast, at the most, were able to pass.

After what has already been said in describing the siege and its incidents, two words will suffice to make our readers understand the situation of the constable and the nature of the blunders which he committed on that fatal day.

The whole Spanish army, with its Flemish and English contingents, occupied the right bank of the Somme. The forty companies of Julian Romeron and of Carondelet, together with the two which the constable had surprised, occupied, entirely unsupported, — the forty companies the

Faubourg d'Isle, and the two the mill at Gauchy; both faubourg and mill being situated on the right bank of the Somme.

Now, once having reached the mill at Gauchy, and the two companies being captured, there remained for the constable a manœuvre not very difficult of execution; namely, to block the forty companies of the two Spanish captains, to plant a battery of six guns so as to command the approach to the causeway along which the enemy must come in order to attack him, to despatch as many men as were necessary to St. Quentin, then to withdraw after the town had been revictualled; sacrificing perhaps two guns from the battery and about a hundred men of the force detailed to support it, who would have kept up a continuous fire on the causeway, and been quite able to hold it during the revictualling of the town.

The constable captured the two companies, and blocked the forty in the Faubourg d'Isle; but utterly disregarding the causeway, he ordered the four large boats to be launched, which, since the besieged had only three or four small ones, on their advice he had brought with him. But it was then noticed that instead of being at the head of the column, the carts which dragged the boats were far in the rear. Three hours were thus lost in bringing them to the bank of the Somme; then, after they had been launched, the soldiers boarded them so hurriedly that, over-crowded, they ran aground in the mud of the pool of Abbiette.

While this was going on, one of the archers captured in the morning at the mill at Gauchy pointed out to the constable the tent of the Duke of Savoy. The constable immediately ordered up guns, with the object of destroying this tent, and in about ten minutes the battery opened fire; whereupon it was observed, by the stir about the

tent, that the fire was not ineffective. However, the boats, which had at last been successfully launched, began to ascend the Somme, and made a great smoke, — the signal agreed upon between the constable and Coligny.

On the first sound, which indicated that the constable was at hand, Coligny had hurried to the curtain of Tourival, whence he had a view of the whole extent of country as far as the mill of Gauchy. He saw, then, from a distance the boats crowded with soldiers, and ordered forthwith a sortie to be made from St. Catherine's Gate — a movement intended to support the debarkation — at the same time that he had the scaling-ladders fetched and set against the walls, so that every facility should be given for the relieving party, however numerous, to effect an entrance into the town.

Coligny had just made these dispositions, following with his eyes the smoke from the boats, when Procope accosted him, and appealing to the agreement made between the adventurers and the admiral, asked for leave of absence for the day, — the adventurers intending to be engaged on their own private affairs. As this was in entire accordance with the agreement, the admiral had not only no reason, but even no right to oppose this seeming caprice. Full leave was therefore given to Procope and his companions.

The adventurers, consequently, with the bastard of Waldeck — armed *cap-à-pie*, and the visor of his helmet closed — at their head, followed the force intended to make the sortie, and were soon outside the town. Yvonnet's horse, the two horses of Maldent, and a fourth, provided by the bastard, formed the cavalry. The horses were ridden by Yvonnet, Maldent, Procope, and Lactance. The infantry consisted of Pilletrousse, Fracasso, and the two Scharfensteins.

However, in order that they might successfully accomplish the journey if it should be long, Pilletrouse and Fracasso were to mount behind Yvonnet and Lactance. No one troubled about the two Scharfensteins, who were never tired, and could easily keep up with a galloping horse. Poor Malemort, as we have seen, was the only one of the adventurers who was absent ; but as he could not yet stand upright, nor even sit on horseback, he was left behind, and remained in the tent.

The adventurers betook themselves to the bridge where the boats were to land. These did, in fact, soon touch the shore ; but the same disorder and haste which had characterized their launching marked their arrival. Utterly disregarding the words and signs of those whom the admiral had charged with the superintendence of the debarkation, and whose duty it was to point out to them the improvised causeway through the morass which they were to traverse, the soldiers leaped on shore, and immediately found themselves up to their waists in the mud. Then, disconcerted by this, in the midst of a frightful uproar, which prevented their hearing any command, some were crowded over the right of the causeway, thus falling into the mud and peat-bog ; others, driven to the left, lost their way on the side near to the enemy's camp. Dandelot alone, with four hundred men, succeeded in following the line traced by the fascines, and reached dry land.

From the top of the rampart Coligny, in despair, watched this long-expected relieving army diminish and disappear, floundering by hundreds in the quagmires whither their infatuation had thrown them, and where they were gradually disappearing without any possibility of help. However, Dandelot, after rallying some of the stragglers, and those whom he had rescued from the peat-

bogs, at length reached the postern with five hundred men and fifteen or sixteen officers, to whom we must add some noblemen who had gone with the relieving party "for their own amusement," as Coligny said. These last were the Vicomte du Mont-Notre-Dame, the Sieur de la Curée, the Sieur Matas, and the Sieur de Saint-Rémy; an artillery captain and three gunners followed.

After that of his brother, who was soaked through with mud and slime, Coligny declared that the sight of the three gunners gave him most pleasure, there being in St. Quentin no artillerymen save the burghers, who, except as to courage, were far from being able to respond, at least in dexterity and experience, to the needs of a town besieged, and in so formidable a fashion.

The bastard of Waldeck, with the adventurers, waited patiently until the troops had all landed, were lost, or choked in the slime, and followed by his eight men descended the stream, and landed in a little alder wood which stretched, like a silver veil, to one of the extremities of the pool of the Abbiette. Arrived there, he gave each of them a Spanish sash, asking nothing but that each should keep silent, concealed, and ready to obey the first order.

The bastard's plan was easy of comprehension. On the previous evening he had learned that the constable intended to attempt in person to revictual St. Quentin. Well knowing the character of the Duke of Savoy, he rightly thought that at sight of the French army Emmanuel Philibert could not remain behind his intrenchments but, on the contrary, would go forth and give battle on the right bank of the Somme. Consequently, the bastard intended to set an ambush in the marshes of the Abbiette, in the neighborhood of which he conjectured that the action would take place, and had given the ad-

venturers red and yellow Spanish sashes, so that, at that time when uniforms were no longer worn, they would be able, being taken for Spanish scouts, and thus, without exciting any suspicion in the mind of Emmanuel Philibert, to get near, and at last surround him. Having once surrounded the duke, we know what the bastard's intentions were in regard to him.

We shall see whether or not he was deceived in his anticipations.

Emmanuel Philibert had just risen from the table when news was brought him of the appearance of the French army on the other side of the Somme. His tent was situated on an eminence, so that he had only to go outside it and turn to the side toward La Fère, in order to see it formed in line of battle on the heights behind the Abbiette; then lowering his eyes, he watched below him, but out of musket-range, the debarkation of Dandelot and the force under him. At that moment a whistling, whose meaning soldiers never mistake, was heard over his head, followed by two or three others, and a ball burying itself in the ground covered him with sand and pebbles.

Emmanuel Philibert made a step forward, to gain a point whence he could follow with his eye the course of the Somme; but while he was advancing as it were toward the enemy's fire, he felt a strong hand seize him by the arm and drag him backward. It was the hand of Scianca-Ferro. Just then a ball passed through the tent, making a hole on each side.

To remain longer in this tent, which had clearly become a target for the constable's artillery, was to be exposed to certain death. While giving orders to his attendants to bring him his arms and to saddle his horse, Emmanuel Philibert entered a small chapel and mounted the steeple, whence he could see that the French army had advanced

no farther than St.-Lazaire, and that the village was not guarded by even a small body of cavalry.

Having made these observations, Emmanuel Philibert came down from the steeple, rapidly donned his armor at the porch of the little chapel, called Count Horn and Count Egmont, sent a messenger to Duke Eric of Brunswick and Count Mansfield, ordering them to reconnoitre the French army, and above all to make sure that the Rouvroy road was not threatened by any battery, masked or not, and directing them to report to him at the quarters of Field-Marshal de Binincourt. A quarter of an hour later Emmanuel repaired thither. He had been half-way around the town, passing on his way Florimont and the road known to-day as La Ruelle d'Enfer (Hell's Lane), which led to the siege-works, passing through St. Pierre-au-Canal, and ending at the Faubourg St. Jean. The aides-de-camp of the Duke of Brunswick and of Count Mansfield had already returned with the information that the Rouvroy road was perfectly free, and that the French army did not extend as far as La Neuville.

Emmanuel Philibert immediately ordered up two thousand cavalry, put himself at their head, and occupied the Rouvroy road, which he held until the arrival of the infantry. Then, as the troops came up, he directed them to advance on Le Mesnil by way of Harly, by this *détour* concealing them from the French. More than fifteen thousand men thus passed over the Rouvroy road while the constable was still amusing himself by firing at the empty tent of Emmanuel Philibert.

Suddenly the Duc de Nevers, who had been sent by the constable with some men-at-arms and the brigades of Curton and of D'Aubigné to reconnoitre the plain of La Neuville, discovered, on ascending an eminence, the positions taken by the Spanish troops. An immense column,

covered by the two thousand horse of the Duke of Savoy, was advancing from beyond Harly, and stood out, dark and thick, behind Le Mesnil-St.-Laurent, already enclosing the constable's army in a half-circle.

For an instant the duke, weak as was the force which he had under him, entertained the idea of sending word to the constable that he would sacrifice his force there, in order to give the French time to retreat; but the constable had peremptorily forbidden him to bring on an engagement; what he proposed would be disobeying direct orders, and he knew how arbitrary the constable was as regards military discipline. He dared not take upon himself the responsibility of such an act; but falling back on a corps of light cavalry commanded by the Prince de Condé, who had formed in line of battle at the mill of Gratte-Pause, on the road from Le Mesnil, he put spurs to his horse and went in person to announce to the constable what had occurred.

The constable forthwith called to him Monsieur de Saint-André, the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, the Duc d'Enghien, and the other generals of his army, and explained to them that, satisfied with having afforded his nephew the relief which the latter had asked for, he deemed it wise to beat a retreat, in as dignified a manner as possible, but at the same time with all possible celerity. He then begged each chief to return to his command, to give his men all the support he should be able, and to withdraw as rapidly as possible, avoiding an engagement unless attacked.

But though the constable gave such good advice in regard to taking proper measures for the retreat, he himself did not adopt the simple precaution of putting a hundred arquebusiers into each of the windmills at Urvilliers, at Essigny-le-Grand, and at what is now called Manufac-

ture, to break up the enemy's front, and thus keep him engaged.

The French infantry first began to retreat; they advanced with a rapid step, but in good order, toward the wood of Jussy, which alone offered them shelter from the enemy's cavalry charges. But it was too late; there was still a distance which it would take three quarters of an hour to pass, when at five hundred paces from the French were seen the squadrons and battalions of the Spaniards, forming around their army a vast circle. The two armies were face to face.

The constable ordered a halt, parked his guns, and waited. The numerical superiority of the enemy's cavalry left him no hope of reaching the wood.

Then Emmanuel Philibert divided his army into three corps; gave to Count Egmont the command of the right wing, to Dukes Ernest and Eric of Brunswick that of the left, explained to them his plan, shook hands with them, received from them their promise not to undertake anything without his orders, and assumed the command of the centre.

Between the Spanish and the French armies was a multitude of sutlers, servants without masters, then known as *goujats*, — in short, all the wretched crowd which at that time settled on an army like vermin. Emmanuel Philibert ordered several volleys of cannon-shot to be fired into this rabble. The effect was such as he anticipated; terror spread among them; about a thousand men and women, uttering terrible cries, threw themselves into the constable's ranks. The soldiers tried to repulse them; but terror at times avails more than courage.

Rising in his stirrups, Emmanuel Philibert saw the disorder which this rush had made in the French ranks. Then, turning toward Scianca-Ferro, he said, —

"Let Count Egmont fall on the French rear-guard with the whole of his Flemish cavalry. It is time."

Scianca-Ferro set off like lightning.

Then to Duke Ernest, who had remained near him, Emmanuel Philibert said, —

"Duke, while Egmont is charging the rear-guard with the Flemish cavalry, do you and your brother each take two thousand dragoons and attack the head of the column. As to the centre, I will take care of that myself."

Duke Ernest galloped off.

Emmanuel Philibert watched the two messengers, and seeing that each of them had reached his destination, and that the movement had begun which he had ordered, drew his sword, and waving it in the air, cried, —

"Sound, trumpets; the hour has struck!"

The Duc de Nevers, who commanded the extreme left of the French, had been charged with the task of repulsing the attack of Count Egmont. Taken in flank by the Flemish cavalry while crossing the valley of Grugies, he turned to face the enemy with his men-at-arms; but two misfortunes occurred to hamper his movements: a mob of the camp-followers, repulsed from the centre of the army, and driven from rank to rank, appeared on the tops of some hills, and descended like an avalanche, rushing between the horses' legs, while at the same time a company of English light-horse in the pay of France wheeled around and joined the Flemish cavalry, with whom they immediately returned and charged the men-at-arms of the Duc de Nevers so furiously that a body of our cavalry was driven into the valley of the Pire.

At this time, and as, notwithstanding the superhuman efforts of the Duc de Nevers, who performed prodigies of valor on this fatal day, disorder began to manifest itself in the left wing, Dukes Eric and Ernest of Brunswick,

carrying out the orders given to the one and sent to the other, attacked the head of the French column on its leaving Essigny-le-Grand and at the moment when it emerged on the road to Gibercourt. But this column, having been exposed to no such misfortune as a rush of camp-followers or a desertion of English light-horse, stood firm and continued its march, repelling the charges of the dragoons, and affording time to the constable and to the major portion of the army — which in its passage across Essigny-le-Grand had been narrowed out — to re-form line of battle in the middle of the vast plain which stretches between Essigny-le-Grand, Montescourt-Lize-roles, and Gibercourt. There, feeling that he could go no farther, the constable halted a second time, like a hunted boar which turns at bay, and muttering his paternosters, he formed his army in a square and placed his guns in batteries. As we have said, this was the second halt; now he was entirely surrounded: he must conquer or die.

Though the old warrior did not fear to die, he had not entirely lost hope of conquering; and as the event showed, the old French infantry, on which the constable had relied, showed itself worthy of its ancient renown, withstanding the shock of the whole Spanish army, while at its mere approach the German hirelings, lowering their pikes and raising their hands, begged for quarter.

In the mean time the Duc d'Enghien, young and full of ardor, hastened with his light cavalry to the help of the Duc de Nevers, whom he found remounting, — for he had been thrown from his horse twice, — notwithstanding that a pistol-ball had grazed his thigh. This was the first wound; toward the end of the day he was to receive another.

Nevertheless the constable still held firm. His infan-

try repulsing with incredible bravery the charges of the Flemish cavalry, Emmanuel Philibert ordered up the guns, to destroy this living rampart. Ten cannon thundered at the same time, making a frightful breach in the French ranks ; thereupon the Duke of Savoy put himself at the head of a squadron of cavalry, and charged like a simple captain. The shock was felt throughout the host, and was decisive ; the constable, surrounded on all sides, defended himself with the courage of despair, saying, according to his custom, a *Pater*, and giving with each sentence of the *Pater* a blow which overthrew an enemy.

Emmanuel Philibert saw him from afar, recognized him, and spurred toward him, crying, —

“Take him alive ! It is the constable !”

It was time ; Montmorency had just received a pike-thrust which inflicted a wound under the left arm by which he was, in consequence of loss of blood, becoming rapidly exhausted. The Baron of Batenbourg and Scianca-Ferro, who had heard Emmanuel's call, rushed forward, made a rampart for the constable with their bodies, and dragged him out of the *mêlée*, begging him to surrender, as all further resistance was useless.

The constable, however, as a sign that he surrendered, gave up only his poniard ; he would give, he said, his sword into the hands of the Duke of Savoy alone. This sword, covered with fleurs-de-lis, belonged to the Constable of France, and could be given to no meaner man. Emmanuel Philibert therefore hurried forward, and announcing his rank, received the sword from the hand of Montmorency himself.

The day was gained for the Duke of Savoy, but it was not yet over ; until night fighting continued, and many who would not surrender were in consequence killed. Among these were Jean de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien, —

who, after having two horses killed under him, was shot through the body while endeavoring to save the constable, — François de la Tour, Vicomte de Turenne, and eight hundred noblemen, who lay dead on the field of battle.

The principal prisoners besides the constable were the Duc de Montpensier, the Duc de Longueville, the Maréchal de Saint-André, the Rhinegrave, the Baron of Curton, the Comte de Villiers, the bastard of Savoy, brother of the Duke of Mantua, the Seigneur de Montbron, son of the constable, the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, the Duc de Bouillon, the Comte de la Roche-Guyon, the Seigneur de Lausac, the Seigneur d'Estrées, the Seigneur de la Roche du Maine; last, the Seigneurs de Chaudenier, de Poudormy, de Vassé, d'Aubigné, de Rochefort, de Brian, and de la Chapelle.

The Duc de Nevers, the Prince de Condé, the Comte de Sancerre, and the eldest son of the constable fled to La Fère, where they were rejoined by the Sieur de Bordillon, taking with him two guns, — the only ones which were saved from that great defeat, where France, of an army of eleven thousand men, had six thousand killed, three thousand taken prisoners, and lost three hundred baggage-wagons, sixty standards, fifty cavalry standards, and the whole of the baggage, tents, and provisions. Ten thousand men alone remained to stay the enemy's advance on the capital. Emmanuel Philibert ordered his troops to return to their encampments.

The night had come; and dreaming, doubtless, not on what had been done, but on what was yet to be done, Emmanuel Philibert, accompanied only by a few officers, was following the road which leads from Essigny to St. Lazare, when eight or ten men, some on horseback, some on foot, left the mill at Gauchy and stole gradually up to the group of noblemen which formed his escort. For some

time the party continued to proceed in silence; but suddenly, while passing near to a clump of trees, whose shadow increased the darkness, the Duke of Savoy's horse uttered a painful neigh, shied, and fell. Then a sound was heard like steel clashing against steel; and then in the shadow this cry, the more terrible that it was uttered in a low voice, —

“Now, then, down with Duke Emmanuel!”

But scarcely were these words pronounced, — scarcely could it be guessed that the horse's stumble was not accidental, and that its rider was in danger, — than, overturning all before him, friends and foes alike, with his mace, a man rushed into the midst of this dark and almost invisible tragedy, crying out, —

“Steady, Brother Emmanuel, I am here!”

Emmanuel needed no encouragement from Scianca-Ferro; he had not lost his presence of mind, for though he was thrown on the ground he had seized one of the aggressors, and clasping him around the waist had pulled the man over him and made a shield of him. The horse, too, had had the hamstring of one of his hind legs cut; but as he felt the necessity of defending his master, with the three unhurt limbs he kicked out vigorously, and knocked down one of the unknown spectres which had suddenly risen around the victor in that day's fight.

While all this went on, and still wielding that terrible mace, Scianca-Ferro cried, —

“To the help of the duke, gentlemen, — to the help of the duke!”

It was unnecessary. All the nobles of the escort drew their swords, and each flung himself, striking at random, into the terrible *mêlée*, where no other cry was heard but “Kill! kill!” and in which no one knew who was slain or who slew.

At length about twenty horsemen were heard approaching, and from the reflection of the flame on the trees it was seen that they carried torches. On seeing and hearing this, two horsemen slipped out of the struggle and fled across country without it occurring to any one to pursue them. Two men on foot also threw themselves into the woods, where they disappeared without any one seeking to follow them thither. All resistance, of course, ceased.

In a few minutes twenty torches lit up this new battlefield. The first care of Scianca-Ferro was with regard to the duke, who, if he was wounded at all, had received but slight wounds; the man whom he had clasped in his arms had protected him, and received most of the blows intended for Emmanuel. This man appeared to have swooned away; but Scianca-Ferro did not feel sure of that; therefore, "to mak sicker," he struck him with the mace on the back of the head.

As to the three other men who lay stretched on the ground, and who seemed to be either dead or dying, no one knew them. He whom the duke had clasped around the waist and had dragged on to himself, wore a helmet with a visor which visor was drawn down. The attendants unlaced the ear-laps, took off the helmet, and the pale face of a man of about twenty-four or five was disclosed. His red hair and sandy beard were covered with blood, which flowed from both mouth and nose, as well as from a wound which he had received at the back of the head. But notwithstanding his extreme paleness and his blood-stained face, both Emmanuel Philibert and Scianca-Ferro undoubtedly recognized at the same time the wounded man, for they rapidly exchanged glances.

"Ah," murmured Scianca-Ferro, "it is you, then, serpent!" Then turning toward the duke, "See, Emman-

uel," he said, "he has only swooned! Shall I finish him?"

But Emmanuel raised his hand, both to signify that he was to be obeyed and that his friend should not speak; and himself taking the young man, who had fainted, from the hands of Scianca-Ferro, he dragged him to the other side of the ditch which ran along the wayside, set him up against a tree, and laid his helmet near him. Then remounting his horse,—

"Gentlemen," said he, "God alone is able to judge in regard to what has happened between that young man and me; and you see that God is with me." Then, hearing Scianca-Ferro grumble, and seeing him look toward the wounded man and shrug his shoulders, "Brother," said he, "I beg you to refrain; the father was enough." Then to the others he added: "Gentlemen, it is my wish that the battle which has been fought to-day, the 10th of August, and which has resulted so gloriously for the Spanish and Flemish arms, should be called the Battle of St. Lawrence, in memory of the day on which it has been fought."

Thereupon they returned to the encampment, discussing the battle, but without saying a word in regard to the affray which had followed it.

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE ADMIRAL GOT THE NEWS OF THE BATTLE.

GOD had once more declared against France, or rather — to sound the mysteries of Providence more deeply than the common run of historians do — God had just prepared the task of Richelieu, as by Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt he made ready that of Louis XI. Later, indeed, he will perhaps exhibit to the world the great example of a kingdom which has been ruined by its nobility, saved by its people. However that may be, the blow was a terrible one, and struck to the very heart of France, while it rejoiced our great enemy, Philip II. of Spain.

The battle took place, as we have said, on the 10th of August; but it was not until the 12th that the King of Spain felt so safe against a possible resurrection of the nobles who lay on the plains of Gibercourt as to venture to rejoin Emmanuel Philibert in the camp. The Duke of Savoy, who had given up all the undulating land between the Somme and the chapel of Épargnemaille to the English contingent, had returned to pitch his tent before the rampart of Rémicourt, — the point whence he had decided to direct the siege-works if, contrary to all expectation, on the news of the lost battle, — and lost under such terrible conditions, — St. Quentin should be still unwilling to surrender. This second encampment, situated on a hillock between the river and the tents of the division of the Comte de Mègue, was within range of the guns of the town.

Philip II., after procuring at Cambrai an escort of a thousand men, and having apprised Emmanuel Philibert of his advent, in order that the latter should increase twofold or even threefold, if he deemed it advisable, the royal escort, by troops sent from the encampment, — Philip II., we say, arrived before St. Quentin on the 12th of August, at eleven o'clock in the morning.

On the confines of the encampment Emmanuel Philibert awaited him. On the king's arrival the duke assisted him to dismount ; and as Emmanuel, according to established custom, even in the case of a prince of the blood, was about to kiss the royal hand,—

“No, Cousin, no,” said Philip ; “it is for me to kiss yours, who have just gained so great and glorious a victory, and which has been attended on our part with so little loss.”

The king believed, as we learn from the chronicles of this singular battle, that the Spanish lost only sixty-five men, and the Flemish five ! As for the English contingent, it had not needed to join in the fight at all, and from its position had simply stood by and watched the French defeat.

As we have said, the French loss was appalling ; corpses covered the whole plain between Essigny, Montescourt-Lizeroles, and Gibercourt. It was a pitiable sight, which a Christian deserving the name could not behold without emotion. Catherine de Lallier, mother of the Sieur Louis Varlet, lord of Gibercourt and mayor of St. Quentin, dedicated and had consecrated a field named Vieux-Moustier, in which she caused deep trenches to be dug in which she had all these corpses interred. Since then the field of the Vieux-Moustier has been known as Cimetière le Piteux.¹

¹ Charles Gomart, *Siège et Bataille de Saint-Quentin*.

While this worthy lady was carrying out the pious work which she had set herself, Emmanuel Philibert counted his prisoners; we have already told the reader how large was the number. Philip reviewed these, and then returned to the tent of Emmanuel, while along the trench were planted the French standards captured in the battle, and guns were fired between the Spanish and English camps to celebrate the victory.

The king, seated at the threshold of the Duke of Savoy's tent, took part in all these rejoicings. He called to him Emmanuel, who was conversing with the constable and the Comte de la Rochefoucauld.

"Cousin," said he, "with all this noise, you have doubtless some other object in view than merely to express our joy?"

"Yes, Sire," replied Emmanuel; "I expect that the enemy, seeing no further chance of being relieved, will surrender, even without compelling us to proceed to an assault, — which will enable us to march forthwith on Paris, and to arrive there at the same time as the news of the defeat of St. Lawrence's Day. As for this standard which we have erected here, it is to inform Monsieur de Coligny and Monsieur Dandelot, his brother, that your Majesty is in the camp, and to rouse in him a strong desire to surrender, hoping to obtain better terms from your royal clemency than from us."

But even as the Duke of Savoy ceased speaking, as an answer to all the joyous firing of guns, which surrounded the town with a cloud of smoke, a single flash was seen, a single report was heard on the ramparts, and a ball passed, whistling, three feet above the king's head.

Philip grew deadly pale. "What was that?" he said.

"Sire," said the constable, laughing, "that is a *parlé-mentaire* which my nephew sends you."

Philip asked no more. That very moment he ordered that a tent should be pitched beyond range of the French guns; and when he entered the tent he made a vow, seeing himself in safety, that he would build the most splendid monastery that had ever been built in honor of Saint Lawrence for the manifest protection which the saint had accorded to the Spaniards in the battle of the 10th of August.

As the fulfilment of this vow, the palace of the Escorial was erected, — that dark and magnificent edifice, in complete accordance with the genius of its designer, being in the form of a gridiron, the implement on which Saint Lawrence suffered martyrdom; a gigantic building, on which three hundred men worked twenty-two years, on which thirty-three million livres were expended (which then were worth a hundred millions of to-day), in which light enters by eleven thousand windows, and in which are forty thousand gates, whose keys alone weigh twenty-five tons.¹

While Philip II. was having his tent pitched out of range of the French cannon-balls, let us see what was happening within the town, which as yet had showed no disposition to surrender, — at least if we may judge by the *parlé-mentaire* of Monsieur de Coligny.

The admiral had heard the booming of cannon the whole day, in the direction of Gibercourt, but was in ignorance as to the result of the battle. Therefore before retiring he had left orders that if any one should come to

¹ The reply of a Gascon nobleman who was shown the monastery in all its details, and who was asked what he thought of it, is worthy of record. "I think," said he, "that his Majesty King Philip II. must have been extraordinarily afraid, to have made a vow like that."

the town able to give news, he was to be immediately led to headquarters. Toward one o'clock in the morning he was awakened, and informed that three men had just presented themselves at the St. Catherine Gate, who said they could furnish details of the action. The admiral had them immediately admitted ; they were the two Scharfensteins and Yvonnet.

Of the two Scharfensteins much of course was not to be expected ; we know that fluency of speech was not their strong point. It was quite different, however, with Yvonnet. The young adventurer told all that he knew, — namely, that the battle was lost, and that many had been killed and taken prisoners, — many chiefs, whose names he did not know ; he thought, however, that he had heard it said by some Spaniards that the constable had been wounded and taken. That was all he could say ; Procope and Maldent, who must have escaped, would in all likelihood bring more complete information.

Here the admiral asked Yvonnet how it happened that he and his companions, who ought to have remained with the garrison, had been present in the battle ; to which Yvonnet replied that he believed the right to pass in or out of the town was reserved by Procope in the agreement made with the admiral. Not only had the right been allowed, but the admiral had even been warned of it ; it was then out of pure interest for the adventurers that he asked the question. Moreover he had no doubt as to the part which the adventurers had taken in the battle. Yvonnet had his left arm in a sling, it having been severely cut by a poniard ; Heinrich Scharfenstein had his face laid open by a sabre cut, and Frantz hobbled along with difficulty, having received a kick from a horse which would have broken the leg of an elephant or of a rhinoceros, and which had left a serious bruise. The

admiral enjoined strict secrecy on the adventurers, as he wished to keep back as long as possible from the town the news of the constable's defeat.

Limping along, Yvonnet and the two Scharfensteins returned to their tent, where they found Malemort in the midst of a frightful nightmare. He dreamed that a battle was being fought, that he was a witness of it, but that, stuck fast up to the waist in a swamp, he could not extricate himself, so that he could take part in it. Now, this was not altogether a dream, as we know ; thus, when his companions awoke him, his groans, instead of lessening, redoubled. He got them to tell him all the details of the ambushade which had turned out so unfortunately ; and at each particular, which would have made any one else wish to be a hundred leagues away from any such affair, he groaned, —

“ And of course I was out of it ! ”

At five o'clock that afternoon Maldent put in an appearance, in his turn. He had been left in a swoon on the field, where he was believed to be dead ; he had come to, however, and thanks to his knowledge of the Picard dialect, he had got safely back to the town. When taken before the admiral, he could add nothing to Yvonnet's narration, inasmuch as he had remained concealed during part of the day among the reeds of the pool of the Abbiette.

In the course of the following night Pilletrousse arrived ; he was one of those who had dashed off into the woods, and whom no one had dreamed of pursuing. Pilletrousse spoke Spanish almost as well as Maldent spoke the dialect of Picardy ; thanks to his yellow and red sash, and to the fact that he could speak Castilian with a good accent, he had joined a party of Spaniards who had been charged by Emmanuel Philibert to seek, among the dead,

for Monsieur le Duc de Nevers, who had been so much exposed during that terrible day that it was not deemed possible that he could have survived. Pilletrouse and the detachment of Spaniards had wandered about the whole day on the battle-field, examining the dead, in the vain hope of finding among them the Duc de Nevers. Of course one does not examine dead bodies without feeling in their pockets ; so that Pilletrouse had not only fulfilled a pious duty, but also done a good stroke of business. He returned without a scratch and with his pockets full. According to the admiral's directions he was conducted to headquarters, where he furnished the most circumstantial details in regard to both dead and living, adding to facts of his own personal knowledge those which he had gained from his companions in search.

It was thus through Pilletrouse that Monsieur de Coligny learned of the death of the Duc d'Enghien and of the Vicomte de Turenne, and of the capture of the constable, of Gabriel de Montmorency, his son, of the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, and of the noblemen whom we have named. The admiral enjoined secrecy on him even more urgently than on the others, and telling him that four of his companions had returned, dismissed him.

About daybreak some one came to tell the Jacobin fathers that one of their brothers was being brought home dead by two peasants of Gruoïs. The corpse was stretched on a bier, over which was laid the hair-shirt which the worthy man in life wore next his skin. Five or six times the Spaniards had stopped the bearers on their way ; but each time the latter had made them understand by gestures that they were fulfilling a pious mission, — carrying home to the convent the body of a poor monk who had died in the performance of his religious duties, — and each

time the Spaniards, making the sign of the cross, had allowed them to pass.

The admiral had directed that all living persons seeking entrance to the town should be brought to him, but he had said nothing about the dead; the corpse was therefore conveyed directly to the convent of the Jacobins, where the bier was set down in the chapel. Now, as the worthy brothers surrounded it, anxiously inquiring for the name of the person who lay therein, a voice was heard from the coffin, saying, —

“It is I, dear brothers, — I, your unworthy captain, Brother Lactance. Open quick, for I am suffocating!”

The brothers took care that he should have no need to repeat his cry; though some of them were frightened almost to death, others, braver, saw at once that some clever ruse had been employed to bring back to the town their honored captain, Brother Lactance, and they opened the coffin at once.

They were not mistaken. Brother Lactance rose, went and knelt before the altar, there gave thanks, and returning related that after an unlucky expedition in which he was engaged, he had found an asylum among some good peasants; but as they feared a visit from the Spaniards, God had inspired him with the idea of being brought back on a bier to the town as if he were dead. The plan had been the easier of execution because it was at the house of a carpenter that he had found refuge. We have seen that the scheme succeeded perfectly.

The good fathers, rejoiced to see their worthy captain again, did not haggle over the price of the coffin, or what was to be paid to the bearers; they gave a crown for the bier, and two crowns for the bearers, who begged Brother Lactance to employ them in preference to all others whenever the desire should seize him to be buried again.

It was through Brother Lactance, who had received no injunction from the admiral to be silent, that the report of the constable's defeat began to spread among the Jacobins, and from them it leaked into the town.

Toward eleven o'clock in the morning Maître Procope was introduced into the presence of the admiral, who was standing on the rampart not far from the Tour à l'Eau. Maître Procope had arrived the last of the adventurers ; but it was not his fault. He had done his best, and had brought a letter from the constable.

How was it that Maître Procope had a letter from the constable ? That we are now going to inform our readers.

Maître Procope had simply introduced himself into the Spanish camp as a poor devil of a *reiter*, who filled the office of sword-cutler to the constable. He asked to be employed once more in his master's service, — a request which seemed so reasonable that it was at once granted. Maître Procope was shown the lodging which had been assigned the constable, and he repaired thither.

By a glance he acquainted the constable that he had something to tell him. The constable replied by another glance ; and by swearing and grumbling at the attendants, contrived to get rid of them. Then, when he was left alone with Procope, he said, —

“Come, you scoundrel, I understand that you want to speak with me ; out quickly with what you have to say, and be plain, or I will give you up as a spy to the Duke of Savoy, who will have you hanged !”

Then Procope told the constable quite a story, — of course greatly to his own credit. The admiral, who had every confidence in him, had despatched him to his uncle in order to get news from the latter ; and Procope, to be able to speak to the constable, had adopted the means that we have described. The constable, he added, might

then safely intrust him with a written or verbal reply to his nephew; he would find means to get back to the town, — that he would see to.

Monsieur de Montmorency had no other reply to make to his nephew than to advise him to hold out as long as possible.

“Give me this advice in writing,” said Procope.

“But, you rascal,” said the constable, “if you are taken with such a document on you, do you know what will happen to you?”

“I shall be hanged,” calmly replied Procope. “But don’t trouble; I shall not be taken.”

Reflecting that, after all, it was Procope’s business whether he were hanged or not, and that he could find no better means of conveying a message to Coligny, the constable wrote the letter, which Procope took the precaution of concealing in the lining of his doublet. Then, polishing with all his might the helmet and armor of the constable, which had never appeared so bright since they had been under his care, Procope watched for a favorable opportunity of returning to St. Quentin.

On the morning of the 12th of August the chance offered. Philip II. arrived in the camp, as we have already said; and in the consequent excitement no one thought of paying any attention to so insignificant a person as the sword-cutler of the constable, who then succeeded in making his escape, being helped in his flight by the smoke of the guns that were fired in honor of the king’s arrival. A little later Procope quietly knocked at the gate of Rémi-court, which was immediately opened to him.

The admiral, as we have already said, was on the rampart near to the Tour à l’Eau, whence he had a complete view of the Spanish camp. He had hurried to the rampart on hearing the uproar there, of whose cause he was

ignorant. Procope informed him of the state of affairs, gave him the constable's letter, and pointed out to him Emmanuel Philibert's tent. Then he added that this tent had been prepared for the reception of King Philip II., — an assertion regarding the truth of which the admiral could have no doubt when he saw this tent decked with the Spanish royal standard. Moreover, Procope, who had very keen sight, — a lawyer's power of vision, in fact, — intimated that the man dressed in black, who was seen to be standing at the entrance to the tent, was King Philip II.

Thus it was that the idea occurred to Coligny of replying to all this noise and smoke by a single cannon-shot. Procope asked leave to aim the gun, and Coligny could not very well refuse so slight a gratification to the man who had just brought him a letter from his uncle ; whereupon Procope aimed the gun with all the skill of which he was master ; and if the ball passed three feet above Philip's head, it was assuredly the fault of the adventurer's eye, and certainly not of his will.

However that may be, the constable, as we have seen, took it as Coligny's reply to his letter ; and the latter, satisfied that Procope had done all that he could, ordered that he should be paid ten crowns for his trouble.

In the course of an hour Procope rejoined his companions, or rather a part of them ; that is to say, Yvonnnet, the two Scharfensteins, Maldent, Pilletrousse, Lactance, and Malemort. As to the poet, Fracasso, they waited for him in vain ; he did not reappear. Some peasants, questioned by Procope, stated that they had seen a corpse hanging from a tree, just at the spot where the unlucky affair of the evening of the 10th of August had taken place ; and Procope rightly inferred that this corpse must be Fracasso's. Poor Fracasso ! his rhyme had brought him ill-luck.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASSAULT.

CONTRARY to Emmanuel Philibert's expectation, the victory of St. Lawrence's Day and the arrival of Philip II. before St. Quentin did not bring about the surrender of the town; and when, instead of sending a flag of truce, Coligny, with no respect for the king's majesty, compelled him to beat a hasty retreat by sending an impertinent ball whistling by his august ears, it was evident that the town had decided to hold out to the last extremity. It was therefore resolved to press the siege unremittingly.

The siege had already lasted ten days; assuredly too much time had been lost before such wretched walls. An end must be put in the shortest possible time to the obstinacy of these impudent townspeople who dared still to hold out when they had lost all hope of succor, and who had now no prospect before them except of being carried by assault, and all the horrors which would necessarily follow.

Whatever precautions Coligny had taken to conceal from the inhabitants of St. Quentin the news of the constable's defeat, by this time it had spread over the town; but, wonderful to relate, its effect was, as the admiral himself states, more depressing on the soldiers than on the townspeople.

The great difficulty, nevertheless, which the admiral had, and which, as we have seen, had embarrassed him

from the very beginning of the siege, was to find workmen to make good the damage wrought by the enemy's artillery. The rampart of Rémicourt had sustained the greatest damage, and after the arrival of the English contingent, who supplied Carondelet and Julian Romeron with a dozen fresh guns, it was no longer tenable; for indeed, a first battery had been erected, as we have already said, near the Abbey of St. Quentin-en-Isle, and a second above the heights overlooking the Faubourg. These two batteries commanded the rampart of Rémicourt along its whole side, from the Porte d'Isle to the Tour Rouge; so that the workmen, exposed from head to foot to this cross fire from the Spanish and English batteries, no longer ventured to go near the rampart, which threatened some fine morning to crumble away from one end to the other.

Dandelot it was who got over this difficulty. The idea occurred to him to have all the old boats which could be procured along the Somme carried to the rampart, and to have traverses constructed from them. Toward nightfall the work began. Frantz and Heinrich, each with a boat on his head, like an immense hat, undertook this severe labor. As each boat was placed across the rampart, the pioneers filled it with earth. During one night five boats were filled in this manner with earth and laid across the rampart, thus offering a shelter to the laborers. Then the soldiers reappeared on the boulevard, and the workers resumed their task.

In the mean time two new covered ways had been undertaken by the besiegers, — the first in the direction of the Tour à l'Eau, the second opposite the mill near Rémicourt. The admiral had the paving-stones in the streets taken up, carried to the towers, and thence hurled into the trenches to impede the Spanish pioneers; but

the gabions which concealed the miners protected them to a considerable extent from these projectiles, and enabled them to continue the work of destruction.

Philip II., for the purpose of encouraging the Spanish gunners in the construction of their batteries, sometimes visited them in the trenches ; but one day, while watching one in process of erection, the admiral recognized him, and calling his best arquebusiers, pointed out the royal target. The next moment a perfect hailstorm of balls whistled around the king, who, anticipating possible danger, was always accompanied by his confessor, so that he might have at hand absolution *in extremis*. At the sound of these balls Philip turned toward the monk.

"Father," said he, "how do you like this music?"

"I find it anything but pleasant, Sire," replied the monk, shaking his head.

"That is my own opinion," said Philip II. "I really can't understand how my father, the Emperor Charles V., could find so much pleasure in it. Let us get out of range." And as a matter of fact the King of Spain and his father confessor went out of range, not to return.

To finish these works, however, occupied not less than nine days ; and these were nine days gained for the King of France, who assuredly would make the best use of the time thus gained by the admiral and the good people of his town of St. Quentin.

But at last, on the 21st of August, the batteries were unmasked, and on the 22d the firing began. Only then were the inhabitants of St. Quentin fully able to judge of the danger which threatened them. During these nine days Philip II. had sent from Cambrai all the guns which he could spare ; so that the whole ground between the Tour à l'Eau and St. John's Tower was covered by one huge battery of fifty guns, whose fire was directed

against a line of walls of about a thousand metres in length.

On the other side, the Flemish batteries in the Ruelle d'Enfer had reopened fire; their objective was the curtains of Vieux-Marché and the *corps de garde* Dameuse. At the same time the English batteries, divided into two portions, supported on the one side the Spanish batteries of Carondelet and Julien Romeron, and on the other, under the orders of Lord Pembroke, bombarded, from the heights of St. Prix, the Faubourg of Ponthoille and the tower of St. Catherine. St. Quentin was thus completely surrounded by a wall of fire.

Unfortunately, the old walls which faced Rémicourt — that is to say, the point attacked with the greatest fury — had only a sandstone facing, and could offer but a feeble resistance. As each round was fired, the entire wall shook, and every one expected to see the whole length of its facing crumble away like the crust of a gigantic pie.

And now the town seemed a spot around which were volcanoes vomiting forth fire and destruction. St. Quentin was like the ancient salamander enclosed within a belt of flame; each ball carried away a stone from the wall or shook down a house; the wards of Isle and Rémicourt were nothing but a vast ruin. At first it was sought to shore and prop up the houses; but no sooner had one been propped up than a neighboring house, tottering, dragged it and its supports with it. The inhabitants of these wasted districts, as fast as their houses fell, forsook them and fled toward St. Thomas's Ward, which was of all the wards the least exposed to the enemy's fire; and so great is the love of property that they did not leave the crumbling walls until the moment when they saw them on the point of falling, and some were so slow in getting away that they were buried under their ruins.

And, notwithstanding, not a voice was raised from the midst of this desolation to speak of surrender. All were convinced of the sacredness of what was intrusted to them, and seemed to say, "We shall succumb, — towers, houses, fortifications, citizens, soldiers, — but by our fall we shall save France."

This storm of fire, this tornado of iron, lasted from the 22d to the 26th of August. On the 26th the rampart was nothing but a mass of crumbling stone, in which eleven breaches, all practicable, had been made by the cannon of the allies. Suddenly, about two o'clock in the afternoon, with one accord the enemy's batteries ceased; a silence like death succeeded to the frightful discharges which had lasted for ninety-seven hours, and the besiegers were seen approaching in huge masses by the covered ways. The time for the assault was believed to have arrived.

At that moment a ball chanced to set fire to some cottages situated near the convent of the Jacobins; there was immediately a rush to extinguish it, when suddenly the cry, "To the walls!" echoed through the town. Coligny ran up in haste; he begged of the inhabitants to let their houses burn, but to rush to the defence of the ramparts. These, without murmur, abandoned the fire-engines, and seizing pike and arquebuse hurried to the walls. The women and children tarried behind to watch their houses burn.

It was a false alarm; there was to be no assault that day. The besiegers advanced only to fire the mines that had been laid under the escarpments. Doubtless it was thought that the breaches could not be carried without greater loss than the enemy were willing to incur. The mines were fired, fresh breaches were added to the first ones, fresh ruins to those already made, and the besiegers

retired. During this time the fire, allowed to have its free course, destroyed thirty houses.

The evening and the night were used to repair as much as possible the breaches made in the front where the attack was expected, and to build new walls on the parapets.

Let us return to our adventurers. Thanks to the lawyer, Procope, their arrangements were made with as much good faith as discretion. The common funds consisted of four hundred gold crowns; so that each was to receive, in consequence of the death of Fracasso, and the property which he had left, which was of course to be divided, fifty gold crowns. Each took with him twenty-five gold crowns, and left the other twenty-five in a common stock, which was buried in the cellars of the convent of the Jacobins, after all had taken an oath not to touch the fund in reserve for a year from that day, in presence of the survivors. Of the twenty-five crowns, each was to have the entire disposal, according to his need. It was well understood that the share of those who should die in the interval was to belong to the survivors. Malemort, whose chances of escape were fewer than the others, concealed his twenty-five crowns, rightly thinking that if he kept them about his person they would be lost.

The next morning, the 27th, at daybreak, the thunder of the cannon was again heard, and the breaches, nearly made good during the night, became again practicable. We have said that there were eleven principal ones, whose position and means of defence were as follows: The first, in the tower of St. John's Gate, was defended by the Comte de Breuil, governor of the town. The second was defended by the Scotch company of the Comte de Haran: these Scots were the merriest and the hardest-worked soldiers of the garrison. The third breach, in the Tour

de la Couture, was defended by the dauphin's company, whose lieutenant was formerly Monsieur de Théligny, but was now commanded by Monsieur de Cuisieux, his successor. The fourth, which was in the Tour Rouge, was defended by Captain Saint-André's company, and by Lactance and his Jacobins, — the Tour Rouge being distant only about fifty paces from the convent. The fifth, which was opposite the governor's palace, was defended by Coligny in person, with his own company; he had near him Yvonnet, Procope, and Maldent. The sixth, effected in the tower to the left of the Rémicourt Gate, was defended by a portion of the admiral's company, which was under the orders of Captain Rambouillet; our friend, Pilletrousse, who had friends in this company, contrived to be enrolled in it. The seventh was defended by Captain de Jarnac, whom we have already mentioned. He was very sick; but ill as he was, he had himself carried on the morning of the 27th to this breach, where, lying on a mattress, he awaited the assault. The eighth, which opened a way into the Tour Ste. Périne, was defended by three captains, whom we have hitherto had no opportunity of mentioning, whose names were Forces, Oger, and Soleil; a fourth officer, the Sieur de Vaulpergues, had united his force to theirs: they had under their command men differently armed. The ninth was defended by Dandelot, with thirty-five men-at-arms and twenty-five or thirty arquebusiers. The tenth breach, which was at the Tour à l'Eau, was guarded by Captain de Lignières and his company. Lastly, the eleventh, which staved in the Porte d'Isle, was defended by Captain Sallevvert and the La Fayette company. Here were to be found the two Scharfensteins and Malemort, whose tent was only about thirty paces from the breach. The entire force, distributed around the different breaches, amounted to eight hundred men;

the townspeople, who were mingled with them, amounted to nearly double that number.

At daybreak on the 27th of August, as we have said, the firing began, and did not cease for a second until two o'clock in the afternoon. It was useless to reply to such a hurricane of fire, which shattered the ramparts, destroyed the houses, and drove the inhabitants into the streets least exposed to its ravages. The besieged therefore simply waited; but that no man capable of bearing arms should be in any doubt as to the necessity for his assistance, from daybreak the watchman in the belfry kept incessantly ringing, stopping only to cry through a speaking-trumpet from the top of the tower: "To arms, citizens, to arms!" And at the sound of this bell, at these mournful and unceasing cries, the weakest became strong, the most timid plucked up courage.

At two o'clock the firing ceased, and a flag was raised by Emmanuel Philibert over the salient of the covered way. This was the signal for the assault. Three columns were immediately hurled in three directions, — the first toward the convent of the Jacobins; the second toward the Tour à l'Eau; and the third toward the Porte d'Isle. The column whose objective was the Jacobin convent was made up of bands of Spanish veterans under the command of Alonzo de Cazières, and of fifteen hundred Germans under their colonel, Lazare Swendy; that which advanced on the Tour à l'Eau consisted of six Spanish battalions, commanded by Colonel Narvaez, and six hundred Walloons under the Comte de Mègue's command; lastly, the column which rushed to attack the Porte d'Isle was led by Captain Carondelet and Julian Romeron. This column was supported by three Burgundian ensigns and two thousand English.

The period which elapsed from the moment when the

order for the advance along the trenches was given, to the instant when besieged and besiegers met in the shock of battle, was too short to be measured ; at such times men live years in a single moment. The attack was delivered at the three threatened points. Here for a quarter of an hour was seen nothing but a frightful hand-to-hand struggle ; nothing was heard but cries, yells, and curses ; then, as if hanging for a moment on the summit of the crumbling rock, the wave of humanity which had rushed over it rolled back repulsed, leaving the slope covered with dead and wounded.

Each side had wrought marvels ; the three positions, attacked with deadly relentlessness, had been defended with desperation. Lactance and the Jacobins bore themselves bravely. The enemy was driven from the Tour Rouge back to his intrenchments ; but more than twenty monks were scattered among the dead, lying cheek by jowl with the Spanish veterans of Alonzo de Cazières and the Germans of Swendy. The Walloons of the Comte de Mègue and the Spaniards of Narvaez were not more fortunate ; and compelled to retreat to the trenches, they there re-formed for a second attack. Lastly, at the tower of the Porte d'Isle, Malemort and the two Scharfensteins fought with great effect : Carondelet's right hand was shattered by a pistol-shot fired by Malemort ; and Julian Romeron, struck down by a blow from the club of Heinrich Scharfenstein, and hurled from the top of the ramparts, broke both his legs in the fall.

For a moment there was a halt along the whole line, and the combatants had time to breathe ; but the alarm-bell never for a moment ceased ringing, and the voice of the watchman was still heard crying from the four sides of the tower, "To arms, citizens ; to arms !"

This alarm was unnecessary ; for as we have said, the

assaulting columns re-formed, and being reinforced by fresh troops, returned to the attack by the same road, covered with dead, by which they had advanced for the first assault.

What made the defence sublime was that leaders, soldiers, and townsmen knew well that it would avail nothing, that it could by no possibility succeed ; but they had a great duty to fulfil, and each did it sternly, sacredly, nobly.

Nothing could be more dismal and terrible than this second attack, — we have Coligny's own authority for the statement, — which was heralded neither by flourish of trumpet nor beat of drum. Besiegers and besieged met in silence, and the only sound heard was the clash of steel. The breach which he guarded not being attacked, Coligny could watch the varying fortunes of the fight, and repair wherever he deemed his presence most needed. All at once he saw a troop of Spaniards who, having dislodged the arquebusiers from the Tour Rouge, were advancing along the parapet of the rampart, and were gliding, one by one, into the tower itself.

Coligny was not at first uneasy at this ; the way followed by the Spaniards was so narrow and so difficult that if the dauphin's regiment did its duty the assailants would certainly be repulsed ; but, to his great astonishment, the Spaniards followed, one after the other, the same path, without any one seeming to interfere with them.

Suddenly a frightened soldier rushed up and announced to the admiral that the breach of the Tour Rouge had been carried. It was impossible for the latter — on account of a boat filled with earth, used as a traverse, which was laid between the spot where he stood and the Tour Rouge — to see what was passing at the tower ; but knowing that where the enemy was victorious, there was the place for him, he called five or six men and descended

the rampart, which he supposed he should remount on the other side of the traverse, crying as he went, —

“Help, friends! We must die here!” And he ran as hard as he could toward the Tour Rouge. But he was not more than half-way there when he saw, behind the windmill, which formed part of the fortification, a portion of the dauphin’s regiment, with other soldiers, fleeing toward the convent of the Jacobins, while the monks and the townsmen fell where they stood rather than yield a step.

Coligny thought that he was the more needed because the soldiers were abandoning the Tour Rouge, and he doubled his speed; but when he had reached the top of the rampart, he saw that the breach was carried, and that he himself was running headlong into the middle of a column of Spaniards and Germans, already masters, not only of the breach, but also of the wall itself.

The admiral looked around him: a single page, almost a child, had followed him, together with a gentleman and a valet. At this moment two men rushed on him, — the one armed with a sword, the other aiming at him point blank with an arquebuse. The admiral parried the sword-thrust with his mailed arm, and by the help of a pike he struck up the barrel of the arquebuse, which was discharged into the air. Then the little page, frightened, cried in Spanish, —

“Do not kill Monseigneur l’Amiral! Do not kill Monseigneur l’Amiral!”

“Are you really the admiral?” asked the trooper who had made the sword-thrust at Coligny.

“If this is the admiral, he belongs to me,” said the man with the arquebuse, and laid his hand on Coligny.

But he, striking it with the handle of his pike, said, —

“There is no need for you to touch me; I surrender,

and with God's help I will provide for my ransom a sum that shall satisfy you both."

Then the two troopers in a low voice exchanged some words which the admiral could not hear, and which were doubtless for the purpose of coming to an agreement; for they stopped wrangling about him, and asked if the persons who accompanied him were his attendants.

"The first is my page, the second my valet, and the third a gentleman of my house," replied the admiral; "their ransom will be paid you with mine. Only let us avoid Germans; I don't wish to meet them."

"Follow us," said the troopers, "and we will see that you shall be safe." And asking the admiral for his sword, they led him to the breach, which they climbed over, and helping him down, brought him to the trench, at the entrance of a mine. There they met Don Alonzo de Cazières, with whom the soldiers exchanged a few words; after which Don Alonzo advanced toward Coligny, courteously saluting him; then, pointing to a group of officers emerging from a trench and approaching the wall, who formed the staff of the Spanish general-in-chief, he said:

"Here is Monseigneur Emmanuel Philibert; if you have any request to make, you will please address him."

"I have nothing to say," replied the admiral, "only that I am the prisoner of these brave men, and I should like them to have the amount of my ransom."

Emmanuel heard Coligny's request, and said, with a smile, in French, —

"Monsieur l'Amiral, here are two fellows who, if they are paid for the prisoner at his true value, will be richer than many princes of my acquaintance." And leaving the admiral under the care of Don Alonzo de Cazières, Emmanuel Philibert mounted the rampart by the breach which the admiral had so uselessly defended.

CHAPTER V.

A FUGITIVE.

THE inhabitants of St. Quentin well knew what terrible risks they ran in resisting so obstinately the triple army, Spanish, Flemish, and English, which besieged them, — a resistance over which the fortune of Philip II. had just triumphed so signally. They no more thought of asking for quarter than in all probability their conquerors thought of granting it. Terrible reprisals invariably followed in the train of the wars of this epoch. In these armies made up of men of every nationality, where mercenaries speaking the same tongue often fought on opposite sides, and where pecuniary engagements were in general badly kept, pillage was reckoned beforehand as part of the pay, and even became sometimes, in case of defeat, all the pay the mercenaries received; only in this case friends were pillaged instead of foes.

Thus, as we have seen, the defence had been desperate everywhere, except at the point where the dauphin's regiment had given way. The enemy already occupied the Tour Rouge, the admiral was taken, and Emmanuel on the ramparts; yet at three of the breaches the defenders still struggled, no longer to save the town, but merely to kill and be killed. These breaches were the ones defended by Captain Soleil, by the company of Monsieur de la Fayette, and by Monsieur Dandelot, the admiral's brother. It was the same at several other points in the town: when the Spaniards penetrated it by the Rue

du Billon, they found armed groups of townspeople, who defended the square at Cépy and the entrance of the Rue de la Fosse. However, at the cries of "The city is taken," at the glare of the burning houses, and at sight of the smoke, these last struggles gradually ceased ; the breach where Captain Soleil commanded was carried, then that defended by Monsieur de la Fayette, and then, last, that of Monsieur Dandelot. As each was taken, loud cries were heard, to which succeeded a mournful silence : the cries were cries of victory ; the silence that of death. The breaches forced, their defenders slaughtered or received to ransom, — if from their appearance it was judged that they were rich enough to pay a ransom, — the conquerors flung themselves into that part of the town nearest to the rampart where they had first set foot, and the pillage began, which lasted five days.

For five days fire, rape, and murder — those destroying denizens of towns taken by assault — stalked through the streets, seating themselves on the threshold of houses deserted or overthrown, and wallowing in blood even on the flagstones of churches. None were spared, — neither women, nor children, nor old men ; neither monks nor nuns. Induced by a religious feeling for stones which was lacking for men, Philip had given directions that all religious edifices were to be spared, — doubtless fearing lest the sin of sacrilege should be visited on his own head ; his orders were disobeyed, — nothing stayed the work of destruction at the hands of the victors. The church of St. Pierre-au-Canal was shattered as though by an earthquake ; the collegiate church, pierced through and through by cannon-balls, its magnificent stained-glass windows shattered by the discharges of the artillery, was plundered of its silver-gilt pixes, of its silver vases and chandeliers ; the fine Hôtel-Dieu was burned ; the hospitals of the

Belles-Portes, of Notre Dame, of Lembay, of St. Antoine, the *béguinage* built by the corn-chandlers of St. Quentin, and the house of the Seminary, for the last five days, were nothing but a heap of ruins.

The rampart once carried, the resistance in the streets once overcome, the unfortunate people of St. Quentin henceforth thought only of submitting to fate or escaping from it : the first were ruthlessly slaughtered on the spot ; the others fled into cellars or subterranean passages, where they hoped to lie concealed from their enemies ; still others glided over the ramparts, trying to slip between different detachments of the three armies. But almost all who attempted the last means of flight served as targets to the Spanish arquebusiers or the English archers, and very few escaped the balls of the Spaniards or the arrows of the English.

Murder thus stalked not only in the town, but beyond it ; not only on the ramparts, but in the trenches, in the fields, on the river-banks, — nay, the river itself witnessed the slaughter of some who in desperation attempted to swim across it.

Night, however, came at length, and the sound of musketry ceased. Scarcely three quarters of an hour had elapsed since nightfall, scarcely twenty minutes since the last arquebuse-shot had been heard, when a slight rustling might have been observed in the reeds in that part of the bank of the Somme which extends from the Grosnard to the cutting made opposite Tourival to enable the water of the river to flow into the trenches of the town. This rustling was so slight that it would have been impossible for the sharpest eye or the acutest ear to distinguish, ten paces off, whether it was caused by the night breezes, or by the motion of some otter starting on his nocturnal fishing expedition. All that could have

been seen was that something gradually drew nearer the stream, which was quite deep here ; also that once arrived at the extremity of the reeds, the rustling ceased for some moments, after which the sound as of a slight plunge might have been heard, and at the same time bubbles rose to the surface of the river. Some seconds later, a black point appeared in the middle of the river ; but remaining visible only long enough for an animal not aquatic to recover breath, it immediately disappeared. Twice or thrice again, at about equal distances, without nearing either shore and still following the stream, the same object disappeared, to reappear again, as before. Then at last the swimmer, — for according as he got farther away from the stricken city, and as a look to the right and to the left assured him that the banks of the Somme were deserted, the person whom we are following appeared less to fear being recognized as belonging to that species of animal which has declared itself, on its own authority, the most noble, — then at last, we say, the swimmer deviated intentionally from the straight line, and after several vigorous strokes, during which the top of his head alone appeared above the surface of the water, he landed on the left bank of the stream, exactly at a spot where the shadow of a group of willows rendered the darkness even deeper than in places where there were no trees.

For a moment he stopped, held his breath, and standing as silent and motionless as the trunk of the tree against which he leaned, with all his senses on the alert, rendered more acute by fear of the danger which he had just passed through and which still threatened him, he listened intently, and with straining eyes gazed into the darkness around. All appeared silent and tranquil ; the town alone, wrapped in a veil of smoke, from which

jets of flame frequently issued, seemed, as we have said, to writhe in the tortures of grievous pain.

The fugitive then, the nearer safety he felt that he was, seemed to feel a more keen regret at thus abandoning a town in which he had doubtless left ties of love and friendship. But this regret, keen as it was, did not for a moment seem to inspire him with the desire of returning thither; he contented himself with uttering a sigh, with murmuring a name, and after assuring himself that his dagger,—the only weapon with which he was armed, and which was attached to a chain he wore around his neck (a chain whose value might in the daytime be questioned, but at night seemed to be gold),—after assuring himself, we say, that his dagger worked easily in its sheath, and that a leathern belt, to which he seemed to attach great importance, continued to clasp under his doublet the slight and pliable form with which Nature had endowed him, he hastened toward the marshes of the Abbiette. For one who was not familiar with the environs of the town, the road which the fugitive took would have seemed not without danger. At the period when the events occurred which we are relating, the whole of this part of the left bank of the Somme, where our nocturnal vagabond was venturing, was filled with marshes and pools which were crossed only by narrow paths; but what would have been danger for an inexperienced man offered a chance of safety to one who knew the windings of this muddy labyrinth, and an invisible friend who should have followed the tortuous path of our fugitive, and who could have imagined the apprehensions which would arise on the road which he took, would quickly have been reassured. In fact, at the same pace, and without deviating for a single instant from the line of solid ground which he must follow in order not to be

engulfed in any of those turf-holes in which the constable had so unfortunately left so many of his men, the fugitive crossed the morass, and soon found himself on the first row of hills bordering the plain which stretches from the village of Abbiette to the mill at Cauchy, and which when covered with growing wheat presents, when the wind blows, the appearance of a swelling sea.

However, as it became increasingly difficult to proceed at the same pace in the midst of this ripe corn, half cut by the enemy to procure straw for the bivouac or feed for his horses, the fugitive whose adventurous course we have determined to follow turned to his left, and soon found himself in a beaten track which he seemed to have anxiously sought since leaving the river.

As always happens whenever a goal is reached, the fugitive, feeling under his feet the sand of the highway instead of the stubble of the plain, stopped a few moments, both to look around him and to recover his breath ; then, in a path leading more directly from the town than any he had previously followed, he continued his journey. He ran thus for nearly a quarter of an hour, then again stopped, his eyes fixed, his mouth half open, intently listening. At the right, a hundred paces away, in the plain, rose the windmill at Cauchy, with its huge sails, like the arms of a skeleton ; its very stillness giving it in the darkness twice its ordinary size. But it was not the sight of this windmill, which did not seem to be unknown to the fugitive, and which doubtless appeared to him, not, as to Don Quixote, under the form of a giant, but as it really was, — it was not, we say, the sight of the windmill which caused him to stop short, it was a ray of light which suddenly shone near the door of the mill, and the sound of a small troop of horsemen which struck directly on his ear, while, rapidly approaching him, a compact and

movable mass became increasingly visible to him. There was no doubt about it; a Spanish patrol was scouring the country.

The fugitive knew the spot where he stood, — he was at the very place where the attempt had been made by the bastard of Waldeck on Emmanuel Philibert, — an attempt in which certain adventurers of our acquaintance had fared so ill, and which had had for poor Fracasso such deplorable consequences. To the right was the little wood through which two of the assailants had fled. This wood seemed to be well known to the fugitive; he bounded into it with the speed of a frightened doe, and found himself under cover of a copse of twenty or twenty-five years' growth, with here and there tall trees which seemed the ancestors of all these small ones. It was time; the troop entered the road about fifteen paces from him, at the very moment when he disappeared into the wood. Whether he thought that his sense of hearing would be more acute by contact with the earth, or whether he fancied himself safer lying belly downward than standing upright, the fugitive threw himself on the ground, and remained as motionless and as silent as the trunk of the oak at whose foot he lay.

Our friend was not mistaken; it was, in truth, a troop of Spanish horse who were scouring the roads, and who, informed of the capture of the town by some messenger, or divining as much from the smoke and flames which rose on the horizon, were repairing thither to claim their share in the booty. Some words in Spanish uttered by the horsemen as they passed by the fugitive left him no doubt of their identity. He thereupon kept stiller than ever. Then, when he had given these nocturnal prowlers time to get away, when the sound of their voices had entirely disappeared, and the echo of their horses' hoofs

was no longer audible, he raised his head, and whether he was considering what road he should take to avoid like encounters, or waiting till the beating of his heart, whose violence witnessed to the strength of his emotions, grew calmer, he rose slowly from the ground, first on his knees, then on his hands, crawled along for six or seven feet, and feeling, from the brambles which grew around him, that he was protected by the shade of those tall trees scattered here and there in the copse of which we have spoken, he turned around and seated himself, his back leaning against a tree-trunk, his face turned toward the road. Then only did the fugitive dare to breathe freely; and although his clothes were still wet from his long swim in the Somme, he wiped his face, which was covered with perspiration, and passed his small and well-formed hand through the long locks of his hair.

Scarcely had he done this, which made him utter a sigh of satisfaction, than it seemed to him that a movable object, hovering over his head, caressed in turn, and exactly as he had done, this beautiful hair, about which he was usually extremely careful. Curious to know what this object might be, animate or inanimate, which manifested such a caressing familiarity toward him, the young man — it was easy to guess, from the suppleness and elasticity of his movements, that the fugitive was young — then leaned backward, resting on his elbows, and tried to make out through the thick darkness the form of the object which for the moment interested him.

But all was so dark about him that he could distinguish nothing but a narrow line, a moment ago disposed vertically above his head, now over his breast, and which swung stiffly at every blast of the wind, which drew from the surrounding trees those indistinct nocturnal murmurings which cause the traveller involuntarily to

shudder, inclined as he is to imagine them the moanings of souls in pain.

Our senses, it is well known, rarely suffice, singly, to give us a clear idea of that with which they come in contact, and require the assistance of the others for complete knowledge. Our fugitive resolved then to complement sight by touch, the eye by the hand; wherefore, stretching forth his hand, he touched the object which had excited his curiosity, on which he remained motionless and as though petrified; then all at once, as if he forgot that the precarious position in which he was, laid him under the obligation of silence and immobility, he uttered a cry and rushed forth from the wood, a prey to the most terrible fright.

It was not a hand which had just caressed so tenderly his black hair; it was a foot, and this foot belonged to a man hanging from a tree! It is needless to say that the person thus suspended was our old acquaintance Fracasso, who, as report ran, had, after the unfortunate affair of the bastard of Waldeck, found in the past participle the rhyme which he had so long and vainly sought in the infinitive.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO FUGITIVES.

No stag followed by the hounds ever dashed out of the wood or swept the plain with swifter bounds than this black-haired young man, who appeared to have an inconceivable nervous dread of men when they are hanging, — persons, notwithstanding, less to be feared after than before the operation. The only care that he took, on arriving at the outskirts of the little wood, was to turn his back on St. Quentin, and to run in a direction away from the town; the only desire which he appeared to have was to place the greatest possible distance between himself and it. The fugitive in consequence sustained for three quarters of an hour a pace which a professional runner would have deemed impossible, and accomplished in that time not less than two leagues. These two leagues passed, he found himself beyond Essigny-le-Grand, and on this side of Gibercourt. Two things compelled the fugitive momentarily to halt, — first, his breath failed him; then, second, the ground was so covered with little heaps of earth that you could not, I do not say run, but even walk, without extreme care, under the penalty of stumbling at every step. Consequently, in the manifest impossibility of going farther, he lay down full length on one of those little hills, panting like a stag at bay. Moreover, he doubtless reflected that he had long ago passed the Spanish advance-guards; and as to the man who was hanged, if he had intended to descend his tree

and pursue him, he would not have waited three quarters of an hour to give himself this slight pleasure.

On this last point our young friend might have made a reflection still more to the point; to wit, usually if men who have been hanged were able to descend from the scaffold, whether that scaffold were in a public square, or took the form of a forest tree, leafy and full of sap, the situation is not so agreeable to them that they would not descend on the very first day. Now, if our calculation is correct, from the day on which the battle of St. Quentin was fought, to that on which the town was captured, twenty days had elapsed; and since Fracasso had remained patiently hanging by his cord, it was probable that he would remain in that position until the cord should break.

While our fugitive was recovering breath and doubtless indulging in the reflections which we have just made, a quarter of twelve sounded from the steeple of Giber-court, and the moon rose behind the woods of Rémigny; in consequence of which, when he raised his head after making these reflections, the fugitive was able to recognize, by the trembling rays of the moon, the landscape, of which he was the most animated part. He was on the battle-field, in the middle of the cemetery improvised by Catherine de Laillier, mother of the Seigneur de Giber-court; the hillock on which he had sought a momentary rest was nothing else than the mound of a trench where twenty French soldiers had found eternal repose. It seemed decreed that the fugitive should not get outside that sphere of the dead which ever since he left St. Quentin had appeared to extend around him. However, since for some men corpses which sleep three feet under ground are less terrifying than those which hang three feet above, our fugitive was contented this time to yield

to a nervous trembling, accompanied by that slight huskiness of the voice which signifies that a cold shudder passes under the skin of that poor animal, the most easily frightened of all after the hare, — namely, man.

Then, his breast still heaving from fatigue, — a result of the terrible race which he had just run, — our fugitive listened to the cry of an owl which burst forth, melancholy and regular, from a thicket of evergreens which had been left standing as if to mark the centre of the cemetery.

But soon, strongly as the lugubrious chant seemed to attract his attention, he knit his brow, and turned his head gently from right to left, as if absorbed in listening to another sound which mingled with the first. This sound was more corporeal than it: the first seemed to descend from heaven to earth; the second seemed to ascend from earth to heaven. It was the sound of that distant galloping of a horse so well imitated in Latin, according to the professors, who have been filled with admiration for the last two thousand years for the verse of Virgil, —

“*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.*”

I should hardly dare to say that our fugitive was acquainted with this verse, but assuredly he knew the gallop of a horse; for scarcely was the sound of this galloping perceptible to the ordinary ear than this young man was on his feet, gazing all around the horizon. Since, however, the horse was galloping, not over a high-road, but over dusty ground, broken up by the marching and countermarching of the Spanish and French armies, and as sound travelled slowly through this ground, ploughed by the balls and covered with the remains of the harvest, it chanced that in reality the horse and its rider were much nearer the fugitive than the latter had at first imagined.

The first idea which occurred to the young man was that, disregarding the stiffness of his limbs, the corpse which had so frightened him had borrowed from Death's stables some fantastic horse, by whose aid he had started in pursuit; and the rapid progress of the rider and the scarcely perceptible sound of the horse's hoofs in reaching the road rendered this supposition probable, especially to a system rendered nervous and over-excited by recent events, and by the lugubrious appearance of the theatre where they had been enacted.

What was certain in all this was that horse and horseman were scarcely five hundred paces from the young man, who began to distinguish both, as well as it was possible, by the rather dim light of the moon in its last quarter, and to make out a spectre horse and horseman.

Perhaps if the course taken by the fantastic centaur which was approaching him had left our fugitive a clear leeway of twenty paces each side of him, he would not have stirred, and instead of running away would have lain down in the shade between the mounds which served as tombs, so that the apocalyptic vision might pass undisturbed; but he found that he was in the direct path of the new-comer, and he must flee at his topmost speed if he were to avoid being treated by the infernal horseman as Heliodorus, twenty centuries before, had been served by the celestial horseman. Throwing a rapid glance to that point of the horizon opposite to the one whence danger was approaching, he saw, scarcely three hundred paces from where he stood, like a dark curtain, the edge of the wood of Rémigny. He considered for a moment whether he would not better get either to the village of Ly-Fontaines or to Gibercourt, situated as he was about midway between these two hamlets, the first of which lay to his right, and the second to his left; but as he calcu-

lated the distances, he saw that he was at least five hundred yards from either, while but three hundred from the wood. Toward the last then he fled, like a stag which has gained a short rest by the dogs losing the scent, and whose limbs have begun to grow stiff; but as he passed from immobility to rapid motion, it seemed to him that the horseman uttered a cry of joy which had nothing human in it. This cry, borne to the ears of the fugitive on the misty wings of night, gave fresh vigor to his limbs; and as, nevertheless, the sound he made in running frightened the owl concealed in the thicket, and it flew away, uttering a last complaint more lugubrious than before, our fugitive began to envy its rapid and silent wings, by whose aid the dark bird was in a moment lost in the shadow of the woods which lay before him.

But if the fugitive had not the wings of an owl, the horse pursuing him seemed to have those of the chimera; for while leaping over the graves, the young man hurriedly glanced behind him, and saw that the horseman was rapidly overtaking him. Moreover the horse neighed, and its rider kept shouting. Now, if the veins in the temples of the fugitive had not throbbed so hard, he would have understood that the neighings of a horse have nothing unnatural about them, and that the yells of its rider were merely a repetition of the word "Stop!" pronounced in every tone from that of prayer to that of menace; but as, notwithstanding this ascending gamut, the fugitive, instead of stopping, redoubled his exertions to gain the wood, the horseman redoubled his to overtake him. Moreover, though the breathing of the fugitive was almost as husky as that of the animal which pursued him, he kept on, as the wood was now not more than fifty paces off; yet still the pursuer was not more than a hundred behind him.

These last fifty yards were to the fugitive what to the shipwrecked mariner, swept along by the waves, are the last fifty strokes by which he counts on reaching the shore ; moreover, the mariner has a chance that even if his strength should fail him, the tide will carry him alive to the beach. But no such hope as this could lull our fugitive, if, as seemed more than probable, his legs should fail him before he reached that safe covert whither the owl had already preceded him, and whence it seemed to mock with its funereal hoot at his last powerless efforts. With his arms outstretched, his throat parched, his breathing strident, a singing in his ears, and a cloud of blood before his eyes, our fugitive was within twenty paces of the wood, when, turning his head, he saw that the horse, which never ceased neighing, and its rider, who still kept shouting, were not more than ten paces behind him. Then he made one last effort ; but his voice died away in his throat, his limbs suddenly grew stiff ; he heard, as it were, a peal of thunder, felt a breath as of flame on his shoulder, experienced a shock which seemed as though it might have been caused by a stone hurled from a catapult, and rolled over, half fainting, into the ditch at the entrance of the wood. Then, as if through a mist of flame, he saw the rider dismount, rush toward him, raise him up, seat him on the bank, look closely at him by the moonlight, and heard him all at once cry out,—

“ By the soul of Luther, it is Yvonnet ! ”

At these words the adventurer, who began to recognize that the horseman was human, strove to collect his senses, fixed his haggard eyes on him who after so fierce a pursuit addressed him with such cheering words, and with a voice which from the dryness of his throat sounded like a death-rattle, he murmured, —

“ By the soul of the Pope, it is Monseigneur Dandelot ! ”

Since we know why Yvonnet fled from Monseigneur Dandelot, let us now tell why Monseigneur Dandelot pursued Yvonnet; and for this purpose it will be necessary to go back to the moment when Emanuel Philibert set foot in the breach made in the rampart of St. Quentin.

CHAPTER VII.

ADVENTURER AND CAPTAIN.

WE have said that Yvonnet, Maldent, and Procope were stationed at the same breach as Coligny, — which breach was not difficult of defence, never having been attacked. Moreover we have described how the neighboring breach was surprised by the Spanish storming-party ; how wretchedly the dauphin's regiment behaved ; how, seeing the state of affairs on his left, Coligny had rushed forward, calling on the bystanders to follow him ; and how after the *détour* which the traverse had compelled him to make, he mounted the rampart which the Spaniards had already carried, and cried, " Let us die here ! "

Undoubtedly this noble determination was in the heart of the admiral, and doubtless he did what he could to carry it out, though, after all, he did not die at the breach, — whether prevented by divine grace or heavenly vengeance, will depend on how we regard his murder on St. Bartholomew's Day, from the Catholic or the Protestant standpoint.

But this determination, boldly and sincerely announced by a general on whose shoulders rested the entire political and military responsibility, — that a soldier must die on the day he is conquered, — this determination was assuredly not shared by the three adventurers who had given their aid, through the medium of Procope, for the defence of the town. So, seeing that it was in the hands of the enemy, they regarded their engagement as rightly

cancelled ; and without communicating this opinion to his associates, each of them fled to that quarter where he hoped to find safety. Maldent and Procope disappeared by the corner of the convent of the Jacobins ; and as for the present we suspend all account of their doings, we will leave them to their good or ill fortune, to follow their companion, Yvonnet.

Yvonnet at first intended — let us do him that justice — to take the road for Vieux-Marché, with the intention of offering his sword and poniard to his sweetheart, Gudule Pauquet ; but it doubtless occurred to him that however formidable these weapons might be in his experienced hand, they would be of very little use to a girl whose beauty and natural graces would defend her much more efficaciously against the rage of the victors than all the swords and all the poniards in the world. Moreover, he knew that Gudule's father and uncle had prepared in the cellars of their houses a hiding-place for their valuables — and among their valuables they naturally placed their daughter and niece first — which they regarded as perfectly safe from discovery, and in which they had gathered together provisions at all events for ten days. Now, however relentless the pillage might be, it was probable that the leaders would take care that order should be re-established in the unhappy town before the ten days were up, and that when things had resumed their ordinary course, Gudule might creep out of her hiding-place, and at a fit time revisit the light of day. The sack of the town would then in all probability, thanks to the precautions taken, progress quite tranquilly, as far as the young lady was concerned, who, like the early Christians, would from the catacombs, where she was concealed, hear the roar of the carnage above her head.

Once convinced that his presence with Gudule, instead of being serviceable, could not but be harmful to her, Yvonnet, little anxious moreover of burying himself for ten days like a badger or a dormouse, took the chance of what might happen to him, and resolved to remain above ground, and instead of hiding in some corner of the besieged town hastened to use every means to put, by the evening of the next day, the greatest possible distance between them.

Leaving Procope and Maldent behind, who, as we have said, fled around the corner of the Jacobins' convent, he began by threading the Rue des Ligniers, crossed near the Rue de la Sellerie, ran up along the Rue des Brebis as far as the square known as Des Campions, ran down to the Ruelle de la Brassette, skirted the Rue des Cannoniers, and reaching St. Catherine's Church by the Rue de Poterie, found himself on the rampart between the tower and the postern of that name.

While running, he unbuckled his sword-belt and the clasps of his cuirass, and as his sword and cuirass would be rather a hindrance in the plan of flight which he had just determined on, he threw the first over a wall in the Rue Brassette, and the last behind a post in the Rue de la Poterie. But he took care to retain his poniard, which was attached to a gilded copper chain that formed a neck ornament for him, and he tightened the belt which contained the twenty-five gold crowns that constituted half his fortune; for though Malemort, not being able to run, had buried his wealth, Yvonnet, who reckoned on his own good legs to save his crowns and his life, was unwilling to let the part of the treasure at his disposal go out of his sight.

Arrived at the rampart, Yvonnet leaped boldly over the parapet, and dropped into the moat, full of cold

spring water which flowed by the walls. He had slipped by so rapidly that the sentinels hardly noticed him; moreover, the cries which at that moment were heard from the other side of the town were of far more interest to them than the man or the stone which had been heard to drop into the moat, and which did not rise again to the surface, whose widening circles had just broken on the one side against the wall, and on the other against the grassy slope of the marsh of Grosnard. The person whose fall had caused these multiplied circles took care not to rise to the surface, swimming under water to a cluster of water-lilies, under whose leafy shelter he squatted, concealing his head, — all that was necessary, for he was up to his chin in the water.

While there, he was witness of a sight quite enough of itself to bring his nerves to the state of tension in which we have seen them. The town once taken, many of the inhabitants followed the same road as he had done, — some leaping, like him, over the rampart, others escaping by the postern of St. Catherine; but all had the same unfortunate notion of trying to get away at once, instead of waiting for night. Now, to get away at once was quite impossible, in consequence of the circle which the English had taken care to draw around the face of the wall which extended from the old Vermand road to the banks of the Somme. All these fugitives, therefore, were met by musket-shots or arrows, and driven into the swamp, where they formed excellent targets for the English archers, who, as we know, were no mean marksmen.

Two or three corpses chanced to fall quite near to Yvonnet, and rapidly disappeared, following the stream till it joined the current of the Somme. Seeing this, an idea occurred to the young adventurer; namely, to pretend to be a corpse, and, keeping still and motionless, to

gain, alive, that blissful current which bore away the dead. All went well until he reached the spot where the waters of the moat joined those of the Somme; arrived there, Yvonnet, turning his head backward and opening his eyes, saw a double row of Englishmen scattered over the two banks of the Somme, who, having no one alive to shoot at, were amusing themselves by shooting at the corpses. Instead of maintaining the corpse-like stiffness which had characterized him on the surface of the water, the young man rolled himself up into a ball, dropped to the bottom, and going on all fours, gained that forest of reeds where we found him, and in the middle of which he lay concealed, without anything befalling him, and whence we saw him issue, to gain the other bank.

As from the moment when the adventurer reappeared under the shade of the willows, we have followed him step by step until, panting, he fell forward exhausted on the edge of the wood of Rémigny, there is no necessity, at least for the present, to trouble ourselves any more about him. We are going to leave him, then, to follow, in turn, the incidents, in all their details, which had happened to Monseigneur Dandelot, brother of the admiral, who had just recognized Yvonnet in so friendly a manner.

We have already said that the breach defended by Dandelot was the last which was taken. Dandelot was not only a general on that day, he played the part of a common soldier as well; for he fought with sword and lance as stubbornly as any dragoon in the army had done. As he was distinguished from the others in nothing save courage, he was respected on account of it, having yielded only to numbers. A dozen men had rushed on him, disarmed him, thrown him down, and led him prisoner to the camp, without knowing that he was the captain;

we will not say that he surrendered to them, only that he was taken prisoner by them.

Arrived at the camp, he was of course recognized by the constable and the admiral, who, concealing his name and the interest they had in him as uncle and brother, agreed with his captors that his ransom should be a thousand crowns, — a sum that the illustrious captives were to pay when they paid their own ransoms.

But Emmanuel Philibert was not deceived in regard to the prisoner; thus when he invited Dandelot to supper with him, to which the admiral and the constable were also invited, he directed that the most careful watch should be kept over the third prisoner, whom he regarded as at least of equal value with the two others. With a courtesy worthy of the glorious times of chivalry, supper was prolonged until half-past ten at night. Emmanuel Philibert tried to make these French nobles — prisoners as on the morrow of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt — forget that they were seated at the table of their victor; and during the evening there was infinitely more said about the siege of Metz and the battle of Renty than about the battle fought on St. Lawrence's Day, or the taking of St. Quentin.

At half-past ten, as we have said, the company rose from table. Tents had been prepared for the noble prisoners in the very centre of the camp, in an enclosure of palisades which was entered only by a narrow entrance guarded by two sentinels. This enclosure was moreover guarded outside by a row of sentinels.

Often during the long nights of the siege Dandelot had, from the height of the wall, gazed long and earnestly over the wide camp lying at his feet. He knew the separate quarters of each chief, the position of the tents of each regiment, the space kept between the troops of

the different nationalities ; even the irregularities of the ground, which gave an undulatory aspect to the city of tents, with their floating banners. Ever since his capture — not very long ago — a single idea, like the pendulum of a clock, had oscillated in the brain of Dandelot ; this was none other than flight. He was bound by no parole ; for, as we have said, he had not surrendered, — he had been taken. Now he thought, not unreasonably, that the sooner he should attempt to put his project of flight into execution, the greater would be its chances of success. Our readers, then, will not be surprised when we say that he had scarcely left the quarters of Emmanuel Philibert, on his way to those provided for the prisoners of war, than he began carefully to examine everything within sight, with the intention of taking advantage of anything, however insignificant, which should offer a chance of escape.

Emmanuel Philibert was about to send an aide-de-camp to Cambrai, to announce the capture of St. Quentin, and to carry to the king the list of prisoners of consequence who had been taken. This list had during supper been greatly lengthened ; and the aide-de-camp, after Emmanuel Philibert had excused himself from the supper-table, had accompanied him to the tent of the commander-in-chief, that he might add to the list the new names which were still wanting.

One of the horses from Emmanuel's stable, chosen for his speed, was standing scarcely ten yards from the general's quarters, the bridle fastened to the saddle-bow, and held by a stable-boy. Dandelot went up to the horse, like a connoisseur who is attracted by a fine racer ; then, justifying his reputation of being one of the best riders in the French army, with a single bound he leaped into the saddle, plunged his spurs into the horse's sides, rode

down the stable-boy, and set off at a gallop. The poor stable-boy cried for help ; but Dandelot was already twenty yards from the spot whence he had started. He passed like a vision by the tents of the Comte de Mègue ; the sentinel there took aim at him, but the match of his arquebuse was out. Another, who was armed with a wheel-lock, divining that the cries which were heard all around him were roused by this horseman, who passed like a flash, fired on him, but missed. Five or six soldiers tried to block his way with their halberds ; but he overthrew some, leaped over others, left all behind, came up to the river Somme, with a single bound plunged into it, and instead of trying to stem the current, drifted down it, and passing through a musketry fire which simply carried off his hat and pierced his small-clothes, but did not leave even a scratch, landed on the opposite bank. Once there, he was nearly in safety.

Consummate horseman as he was, he had too quickly estimated the value of the horse which he rode to fear any pursuit, with five or six minutes' start ; the only thing which he dreaded was lest some chance ball should reach the horse, either killing him instantly or so seriously injuring him as to prevent Dandelot's continuing his journey. Thus our horseman had a moment of disquiet as he emerged from the river ; but it did not last long, — he soon found that the horse was as sound as he himself.

Dandelot was not acquainted with the neighboring country, but he knew the situation of the principal towns which lay around St. Quentin, and which formed the French enclosure, — Laon, La Fère, and Ham ; he divined instinctively the direction in which twenty-five or twenty-six leagues beyond lay Paris. What immediately concerned him was to get out of danger ; therefore he rode

straight before him, and found himself on the direct line of Gauchy, Gruois, and Essigny-le-Grand. When he arrived in sight of this last village the moon arose, and our horseman was able to get an idea, not of the way by which he had come, nor of the spot where he then was, but of the surrounding country and of its appearance.

Dandelot, it will be remembered, had not been present at the battle ; there was nothing, then, in the appearance of the field where it had taken place which would disquiet him as it had disquieted Yvonnet. He continued his journey, therefore, but slackening his horse's pace, and skirting the village of Penay, passed between the two mills at Hinocourt, eagerly looking to right and left as he rode. What our horseman sought was some man who should be alone, some peasant living in the vicinity, from whom he might obtain information as to his whereabouts, and who might serve him as guide, or at least put him on the right road ; so every now and then he rose in his stirrups, eagerly scanning everything which came within scope of his view.

All at once it seemed to him that from the middle of the cemetery of Le Piteux he saw a shadow rise, whereupon he rode straight to the spot ; but the shadow appeared as anxious to avoid him as he was anxious to join it. The shadow then fled at top-speed, and Dandelot immediately gave chase, the fugitive running in the direction of the wood of Rémigny. Dandelot guessed his intention, and by every means possible to a horseman — to wit, by spurs, knees, and voice — redoubled the speed of his horse, taking mounds, bushes, and brooks before him, in order to reach the wood before the shadow whom he was pursuing, and who seemed like that of fleet-footed Achilles, — if the fear of which he seemed to be the victim had not rendered him unworthy of the victorious name

of Achilles. The shadow was not more than twenty yards from the slope, and Dandelot not more than thirty behind him, when the former made a last effort, whose result we have learned : the shadow — which, the nearer Dandelot approached him, became more like a man — rolled at the rider's feet, being struck by the breastplate of the horse. Dandelot leaped to the ground to raise up this fugitive, whose information would probably be so valuable to him, and in the poor, panting, almost fainting fellow, half dead with fear, he recognized, to his great astonishment and at the same time to his great delight, the adventurer Yvonnet.

As for Yvonnet, with equal astonishment and with equal delight, though on different grounds, he recognized the admiral's brother, Monseigneur Dandelot de Coligny.

CHAPTER VIII.

WAITING.

THE news of the loss of the battle of St. Quentin resounded all over France like a peal of thunder from a clear sky ; but it was in the château of St. Germain that its effect was most keenly felt. Never had the Constable de Montmorency, a veteran, ignorant and crotchety, been in greater need, to prevent his falling into complete and utter disgrace, of the unaccountable support which was given him by the constant and unshaken favor with which King Henri II. ever regarded Diane de Poitiers. The blow was terrible. One half the nobility of France was engaged with the Duc de Guise in the conquest of Naples ; the other half had been simply annihilated. A few nobles who had escaped, bruised and breathless, from that great slaughter, gathered around Monsieur le Duc de Nevers ; in them and their followers consisted all the active force which remained to France. Four or five wretched towns, poorly fortified, ill supplied with provisions and munitions of war, and with inferior garrisons, — Ham, La Fère, Laon, Le Catelet, and, like a sentinel lost in the midst of the fire, St. Quentin, the weakest, the least capable of defence, the least tenable of these towns — alone lay between the enemy and Paris.

On the other hand were three hostile armies, — a Spanish, a Flemish, and an English, — the first and second exasperated by a long alternation of victories and defeats ; the third up to the present scarcely engaged, quite fresh,

anxious to emulate the deeds of their forefathers at Cressy, at Poitiers, and at Agincourt, and desirous of seeing that famous Paris, of whose walls another English army had caught a glimpse in the time of Charles VI., — that is to say, a century and a half before.

At Paris there was an isolated king, brave, but with the courage peculiar to the French temperament, capable of being an excellent soldier, but entirely without military genius, whose councillors were the Cardinal de Guise and Catherine de' Medici; that is to say, the crafty Italian allied to French cunning and the pride of a Lorrainer. In addition there was a frivolous court of queens and princesses, of women remarkable for their gayety and giddiness, consisting of the little Queen Marie, the little Princess Élisabeth, Madame Marguerite de France, Diane de Poitiers and her daughter, — almost regarded as affianced to one of the Constable de Montmorency's sons, François-Charles-Henri, — and, lastly, the little Princess Marguerite.

Thus the fatal news of the loss of the battle of St. Quentin, or of St. Lawrence's Day, however we choose to call it, seemed, in all probability, only the forerunner of other tidings not less terrible, — the fall of the town of St. Quentin, and the march on Paris of the allied army. Therefore the king began secretly to order preparations for a retreat to Orleans, that ancient fortress of France, which, retaken by Joan of Arc a little more than a hundred years before, had served as a tabernacle for the ark of the covenant of the monarchy. The queen, the three princes, the little princess, and all the female members of the court were to hold themselves in readiness to leave, whether by day or by night, whenever the first order should be given.

As to the king, he determined to join the remainder

of the army, wherever it should be, and to fight with it until the last drop of blood had been shed. Measures had been taken so that the dauphin, François, should succeed him, in case of his death, with Catherine de' Medici as regent, and the Cardinal de Lorraine for councillor. Moreover, — as we believe has been already stated, — couriers were sent to François de Guise to hasten his return, and with him whatever he should be able to bring of the army of Italy.

Having made these dispositions, Henri II. listened with anxiety, his ear turned toward the road into Picardy. Then he learned that, contrary to all expectation, contrary even to all hope, St. Quentin still held out. Fifteen thousand men had been slain beneath its walls; but the heroic town with only four or five hundred soldiers of all arms continued to struggle against the victorious allies. St. Quentin had, indeed, in addition to its garrison, its brave inhabitants; and we have just seen what good service they rendered. The news of the fall of the town was expected, with the same anxiety, during the next few days; but nothing of the sort arrived. It was learned, on the contrary, that Dandelot had succeeded in entering the town with a reinforcement of a few hundred men, and that the admiral and he had sworn that they would be buried under the ruins of the town. Now, every one knew that when Coligny and Dandelot took solemn oaths, they were likely to keep them; and the king's confidence was in some measure restored. The danger still existed, but it was less imminent.

All the hope of France was concentrated, as we have seen, on St. Quentin. Henri II. prayed that the town would hold out eight days longer; in the mean time, and that he might be at hand to get the first tidings, he set off for Compiègne, — at Compiègne he was only a few

leagues from the seat of actual fighting. Catherine de' Medici accompanied him. We may here notice that whenever it was a question of good advice, it was to Catherine de' Medici that the king had recourse ; when, however, he wished merely to pass a pleasant hour, he visited Diane de Poitiers.

The Cardinal de Guise remained at Paris to watch over and to animate the Parisians. In case of urgency, the king was to rejoin the army, if an army still remained, to encourage it by his presence ; and Catherine was to return to St. Germain to superintend the departure of the court.

Henri found the inhabitants of the different towns much less alarmed than he had feared ; the custom of armies during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries not to risk a step in their conquests until they were assured of the possession of the towns which they met on their route, gave some respite to Compiègne, covered by Ham, Le Catelet, and La Fère. After the king had taken up his quarters in the castle at Compiègne, spies were sent to the neighborhood of St. Quentin to make inquiries as to the condition of the town, and couriers were sent to Laon and Soissons to find out what had become of the army. The spies returned, reporting that St. Quentin still held firm, and showed not the faintest intention of surrendering ; the couriers came back saying that two or three thousand men — all that remained of the army — had rallied around the Duc de Nevers at Laon, who moreover was making the best possible use of them. The duke was well aware of the delays incident to the mode of warfare which, when St. Quentin should be taken, the Spanish army would probably pursue, — taking town after town, leaving none uncaptured on their flanks or rear. He therefore busied

himself simply with strengthening those towns which might retard the enemy's march. He sent the Comte de Sancerre to Guise, whither the count led his company of horse, that of the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, and the two companies of D'Estrées and of Cuisieux. He sent Captain Bordillon to La Fère with five companies of foot, and as many of horse. Lastly, Baron de Polignac set off for Le Catelet, Monsieur d'Humières for Péronne, Monsieur de Chausnes for Corbie, Monsieur de Sésois for Ham, Monsieur de Clermont d'Amboise for St. Dizier, Bouchavannes for Coucy, and Montigny for Chauny. The Duc de Nevers himself remained at Laon with a corps of about a thousand men; thither the king was to forward whatever new troops he should be able to raise, and those reinforcements which could be drawn from the other parts of France. Thus a first plaster was laid on the wound; but nothing was as yet said, for fear lest the wound should be mortal.

It would be difficult to imagine anything sadder than was the old château of Compiègne, already gloomy enough, but rendered doubly so by the presence of its royal visitors. Whenever formerly Henri II. repaired thither, — which he was accustomed to do twice or thrice every year, — château, town, and fortress witnessed a brilliant throng of stately lords and ladies who followed in the king's train; corridors and Gothic halls resounded with revelry, and the neighboring forest echoed to the sound of the huntsman's horn and the baying of his hounds. This time, however, the usual accompaniments of a royal visit were absent. Toward evening a heavy carriage stopped at the gate of the château, without in any wise rousing the curiosity of the inhabitants of the town through which it had just passed. Even the *suisse* was scarcely affected by this occurrence. A dark-

skinned, hollow-eyed man of about forty, with a black beard; a dark-haired woman of thirty-six, with white, clear skin, brilliant eyes, and fine teeth, alighted from this carriage, followed by three or four servants of the household. The porter regarded them with astonishment, cried out twice, "The king! the queen!" then, on a gesture of the king commanding silence, he ushered them into the inner court, closed the gate behind them, and all was over. The next day Compiègne learned that the king and Catherine de' Medici had arrived the night before, which was less sad and sombre than they, and that they were at the château. Immediately the inhabitants learned this news, being greatly excited, they gathered together, and repaired to the royal residence. Henri was ever loved; Catherine was not yet hated. The king and queen appeared together on the old iron balcony.

"My friends," said the king, "I have come within your walls to be myself the defender of the frontiers of France. From this town my eyes and my ears will rest constantly in the direction of St. Quentin. I hope that the enemy will not come so far as this; but in any event we will prepare for defence, and be ready to fight as desperately as the brave people of St. Quentin have done. Whoever shall have news from the besieged town for me, whether good or bad, will be welcome at the château."

Cries of "Long live the king!" echoed through the château. Henri and Catherine, making that royal gesture which has so long deluded the multitude, — laying the hand upon the heart, — withdrew, courtier-like, walking backward. Thereupon the windows were closed, each being barricaded as strongly as possible, and the king did not reappear.

The gardeners, when questioned as to the king's proceedings, replied that he was in the habit of pacing the

most shady walks in the park, every now and then stopping suddenly and silently listening, at times even putting his ear to the ground, to catch the distant sound of cannon. But our readers will remember that no attack was made on St. Quentin until the final one by which the town was captured. Then the king would return to the château full of anxiety because he received no tidings; then he would ascend a sort of tower whence for a long distance was visible the high-road to St. Quentin, even to the spot where the roads branched off to Ham and to Laon, and he would anxiously scan every passer-by who appeared, trembling lest he should be the bearer of bad news, and yet hoping that he should learn something from him.

The king had arrived at the château on the 15th of August, and the days passed without any extraordinary sound being heard, without any messenger bringing tidings from the beleaguered town; all that was known was that it still held out. But on the 24th, as Henri was pacing up and down as usual in the park, suddenly a distant rumbling caused him to tremble. He stopped and listened; but he had no need this time to bring his ear to the ground to understand that it was caused by tremendous successive discharges of artillery. For three days, far into the night, and long before sunrise, the same sound was heard; it was so terrible that the king could easily believe that not one house in St. Quentin would remain standing.

On the 27th, at two in the afternoon, the sound ceased. What had happened? What could this silence mean, after the terrible uproar which had preceded it? Doubtless St. Quentin, less favored than those fabulous salamanders which François I. had used on his coat-of-arms, had just succumbed, in a ring of fire.

The king waited until seven or eight o'clock in the evening listening, wondering whether the sound which had ceased would be heard again. He still hoped that the besiegers would be compelled, from very weariness, to grant a truce to the town. However, at nine o'clock, not able longer to control his anxiety, he despatched two or three couriers, with orders to take different routes, so that if some should fall into the hands of the enemy, others at least might escape.

Until midnight the king wandered restlessly in the park, then he returned to the castle, went to bed, vainly sought sleep, and at daybreak, finding himself still awake, rose, and went to his point of observation. He had scarcely ascended the tower when, gazing eagerly along the road to St. Quentin so often anxiously scanned by him, he saw, in a cloud of dust which the first rays of the sun began to gild, a galloping horse bearing two riders toward the château.

Henri had not a moment's hesitation ; these horsemen could be none other than messengers bringing news from St. Quentin ; therefore he sent servants with directions that they should not be delayed at the Noyon Gate. A quarter of an hour after, the horse stopped before the portcullis of the château ; and Henri uttered a cry of surprise, almost of joy, when he recognized Dandelot, and at seeing behind him, standing respectfully on the threshold, a second person, whose face was not unfamiliar to him, though at first he could not remember where he had seen it. The reader, who has probably a better memory than Henri II., will remember that the king saw him at the château of St. Germain, when our adventurer served as squire to the unfortunate Théligny, who was killed in the early part of the siege.

Since Dandelot and Yvonnet have been seen arriving

at the château on the same horse, we shall not be expected to relate how, after their mutual recognition at the wood of Rémigny, an understanding was established between the fleeing and the pursuing fugitive; how Yvonnnet, who knew the country by heart, having explored it in every direction both by day and by night, had offered himself as guide to Dandelot; and how, lastly, as reward for the service rendered, the admiral's brother had invited the lover of Mademoiselle Gudule to ride behind him, — an arrangement which had the double advantage of saving the adventurer from fatigue and preventing the captain from being delayed. The horse would probably have preferred a different arrangement; but it was a noble animal, full of fire and courage. He did his best on this occasion, all things considered, and took only three hours and a half to cover the distance between Gibercourt and Compiègne, — that is to say, nearly eleven leagues!

CHAPTER IX.

THE PARISIANS.

THE news which our two messengers brought was of that kind which is soon told, but on which one dwells long. After the brief report, made first by Dandelot, of the capture of the town, the king asked for details; and learned, partly from the captain, partly from the adventurer, nearly all that we have told our readers. In short, the town was taken, the constable and Coligny — that is to say, the ablest generals in the kingdom, in the absence of the Duc de Guise — were prisoners, and it was a matter of conjecture whether the victorious army would amuse itself with capturing all the small towns before it, or march directly on Paris. Spend time in capturing all the paltry towns on its route, — that was the mode of warfare suited to the timid, hesitating temperament of Philip; march straight on Paris, — a determination in accordance with the adventurous genius of Emmanuel Philibert.

Which of these courses would the conquerors take? Of this, naturally, Dandelot and Yvonnet were equally ignorant. Dandelot was of opinion that the Prince of Savoy and the King of Spain would forthwith march upon Paris. As to Yvonnet, any question of that nature was far beyond his strategical ability; but since the king insisted that he should give an opinion, he agreed with Dandelot.

There was, then, a majority on this point, that the

victors would lose no time, and that consequently the vanquished had no time to lose. It was therefore immediately determined that after a short rest the two messengers should set off, — Dandelot in one direction, and Yvonnet in another, — charged with a mission in accordance with the military and social position filled by each. Dandelot was to accompany Catherine de' Medici to Paris. Henri, who was unwilling to quit the vicinity of the enemy, sent the queen to make an appeal to the patriotism of the Parisian bourgeois. Yvonnet was to set off for Laon, carrying letters from the king to the Duc de Nevers, and to endeavor, under any disguise which should occur to him, to prowl around the Spanish army, and to do his best to find out what plan the King of Spain proposed to carry out. There were not a few chances that the man charged with this dangerous mission would be taken and hanged; but this idea, which in the dark would have made Yvonnet shudder by the recollections which it would have aroused, had no effect on the young man in broad day. Yvonnet accepted then, — he had nerves only at night-time; but as we have seen, they were then a serious matter to him.

Dandelot was authorized by the king to come to an agreement with the Cardinal de Lorraine, who had charge of the national finances, in regard to the money with which he and his brother were to be supplied in the precarious condition in which they were. As to Yvonnet, he received twenty gold crowns for the information which he had just brought and for the commission which he was about to undertake; moreover, the king authorized him, as he had done once before, to choose from the royal stables the best horse which he could find there. About ten o'clock in the morning, after they had taken about six hours' rest, the two messengers started for their

respective destinations ; only, at the gate each turned his back, — the one to the east, the other to the west.

We shall later see Yvonnet again, who was of less consequence than his companion, or, if we do not, we shall at least hear what has become of him ; therefore let us follow Monsieur Dandelot, as also the queen, Catherine de' Medici, who in his company and under his care pursues her journey to Paris as quickly as the weight of the chariot, drawn by four horses, will permit.

In virtue of the axiom that danger seen from afar is sometimes much more terrible than when seen quite near, the fear was at first perhaps much greater at Paris than at Compiègne. Never since that time when the English from the plain of St. Denis had been able to catch a glimpse of the towers of Notre Dame and the steeple of the Sainte Chapelle had such terror filled the hearts of the Parisians. It had risen so high that on the morrow of the day on which the news of the battle of St. Quentin had reached the banks of the Seine, to judge by the carts loaded with furniture, the horses harnessed, and ridden both by men and women, one would have supposed that he was in Paris on one of those days when people change their residences. Now it was not a mere change of residence that was on foot ; the capital was fleeing into the province. However, gradually, when it was seen that no more alarming news arrived, those who had remained in Paris began to laugh at those who had fled, — thanks to the peculiar organization of the French above all other peoples in their tendency to laugh at everything. So that by degrees the fugitives returned, and once back, they appeared determined to remain till the last extremity, — seemingly strengthened in their determination by being laughed at.

Such was the temper of the Parisians when Catherine

and Dandelot crossed the barrier in the afternoon of the 28th of August, 1557, bringing news yet more terrible than that of the loss of the battle of St. Lawrence's, — namely, the capture of St. Quentin. Now, the effect wrought by certain tidings depends not inconsiderably on the manner in which they are spread abroad.

“My friends,” said Dandelot, addressing the first group of citizens whom he met, “great glory is due to the inhabitants of the town of St. Quentin! They have held out more than a month in a place where the bravest would have hesitated promising to hold out a week; by this resistance they have given Monsieur de Nevers time to raise an army, to which his Majesty King Henri II. is hourly sending reinforcements; and here is her Majesty Queen Catherine, who has come among you to appeal to your patriotism for France and to your love for your kings.”

At these words Queen Catherine, putting her head out of the carriage window, cried, —

“Yes, my good friends, it is I who have come, in the name of King Henri II., to announce to you that all the towns are ready to do as St. Quentin has done. Let the city be illuminated, then, as a sign of the confidence which the king has in you, and of the love which you bear him. This evening, at the city hall, I will consult with the city authorities, with Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine, and with Monsieur Dandelot on the measures to be taken to repulse the enemy, already disheartened by the length of the siege endured by the first of our towns that has fallen.”

The result of this harangue was that the people, who if they had been simply told, “St. Quentin has fallen, and the Spaniards are marching on Paris,” would have run, frightened to death, through the streets and squares,

crying out, "All is lost! we must save ourselves by flight!" instead of that began to cry at the top of their voices: "Long live King Henri II.! Long live Queen Catherine! Long live the Cardinal de Lorraine! Long live Monsieur Dandelot!" and surrounding the carriage of Catherine and the horse of the illustrious knight, the crowd formed a noisy and almost joyful escort from the barrier of St. Denis to the palace of the Louvre.

When the royal cortége reached the gate of the Louvre, Dandelot rose again in his stirrups, so as better to be seen by the crowd which filled the square in front of the palace and the adjoining streets, even as far as the quays, and said with a loud voice: "My friends, the queen desires me to remind you that in an hour she will repair to the city hall, where the municipal authorities have been convoked; she will proceed thither on horseback, that she may be the nearer to you; and by the large number of you assembled she will judge of your patriotism and your love. Do not forget torches and other illuminations."

A loud hurrah re-echoed through the crowd and the queen might have been assured from that time that this people, whom she had just gained over by a few well-chosen words, was ready, like that of St. Quentin, to make every sacrifice, — if need be, that of death itself.

Catherine de' Medici re-entered the Louvre, accompanied by Dandelot; the Cardinal de Lorraine was immediately summoned, and directed to convene the city authorities — aldermen, sheriffs, common council, etc. — in the city hall at nine o'clock in the evening. We have already seen that Dandelot was a clever manager; he chose this particular time with a view to effect. The majority of the people assembled at the gate of the

Louvre, in order to make sure that they would be able to march in the royal procession, and at the same time that they should not be deprived of the first places, determined not to budge from where they were; only a few, deputed by the rest, went to buy torches. On the other hand, those heralds of the people who on all great occasions devote themselves to the office of public criers, went along the streets which led from the Louvre to the city hall, crying, —

“Burghers of Paris, illuminate your windows! Queen Catherine is about to pass, on her way to the city hall.”

And in answer to this appeal, — in which there was no compulsion, but, on the contrary, everything was left to the free choice of the burghers, — in all the houses on the route along which the queen would ride, every man began to bestir himself, as in a huge beehive, to run to light lamps, lanterns, candles, and from every window, as from a luminous socket, to manifest his enthusiasm, which might be estimated according to the number of burning wax or tallow candles.

We say that these common criers went along the streets; for instinctively they guessed that the queen would follow the line of streets, and not that of the quays. Processions which follow along the quays mistake in regard to their choice of route if they desire to see enthusiasm manifested; along the quays enthusiasm follows a procession, but haltingly, like justice: the river-side cannot but be silent.

Thus when the time came, the queen on horseback between Dandelot and the Cardinal de Lorraine, followed by only a small suite, — as is fitting to a queen who appeals to her people on account of reverses of fortune, — entered the Rue St. Honoré opposite the Château d'Eau, followed the Rue St. Honoré as far as the Rue

des Fourreurs, continued till the Rue Jean-Pain-Mollet was reached, and came out on the Grève by the Rue de l'Épine. This royal progress, of which recent events, it would naturally be supposed, would fittingly make a funeral procession, became a veritable triumph, which anticipated the famous proclamations of "the country in danger" which were prepared by the artist Sergent. There everything was got ready beforehand for the queen.

Since half-past four in the afternoon the queen had had time to send to St. Germain for the young dauphin, François, — that pale and sickly child who alone was wanting to make the drama complete. He was the mere shadow of that race of the Valois, now approaching extinction, which descended from the most numerous progeny ever possessed by a king since the days of Priam. Four brothers! True, three of these brothers were in all probability poisoned, and the fourth stabbed. But during the evening which we are trying to describe, the mysterious future was still hidden in the darkness which happily veiled it from human eyes. Every one busied himself with the present alone, — which unquestionably supplied interest enough for those who were most greedy of excitement and of action.

The crowd which followed in the train of the queen amounted to at least ten thousand; a hundred thousand lined the streets on her route, and probably two hundred thousand watched her pass from their windows. Those who followed in her train and those who lined the route carried torches, whose glare, joined to that of the illuminations, produced a light not as brilliant, of course, as that of day, but fantastic, — as daylight is not. The torchbearers who followed the queen waved their torches; the people who sat at the windows waved their handkerchiefs or scattered flowers. All cried out: "Long

live the king! Long live the queen! Long live the dauphin!"

Then every now and then a deadly and threatening breath seemed to pass over this tremendous crowd, muttering in a husky voice, accompanied by clashing swords, the flash of brandished knives, and the reports of arquebuses fired at irregular intervals, the words, originating we know not where, "Death to the English and to the Spaniards!" And at this cry a shudder passed through the bravest; every one felt that it expressed the inveterate hatred of an entire people.

The queen, the dauphin, and their suite, who left the Louvre at nine o'clock, were not able to reach the city hall until half-past ten; during the whole distance they had to cut their way through the crowd,—and on this occasion this expression was literally true; for there were neither horse nor foot soldiers to render the august personages this poor service. Every one was thus able to touch the horse, even the gown and the hands of the queen and the heir-apparent to the crown. The people rushed forward to lay their hands on those horses which threatened to ride them down, on those rich vestments which so singularly contrasted with their own rags,—to clasp those hands which were to rob them of their last *sou*; and this contact made them utter cries of joy, when it should have made them howl with grief.

It was then in the midst of these cries of joy and protestations of devotion of the whole people that the royal cortége arrived at the Place la Grève, where the city hall—a delightful souvenir of the Renaissance, spoiled by Louis Philippe, like all the monuments on which he laid his inartistic hand—had just been built. All the municipal authorities—aldermen, sheriffs, common councilmen, masters of the trade-companies, etc.

— were in waiting on its steps, in the square in front, and filling up the interior even to the dark, vaulted roof. It took the queen, the dauphin, Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine, and Dandelot a quarter of an hour to cross the Place la Grève. Never was the circus at Rome more brilliantly illuminated, even on those nights when, during the reign of Nero, Christians were burned alive, rolled up in brimstone and in pitch; lights shone from every window, torches flared from every part of the place, along the quays, from the galleries, and even from the top of the towers of Notre Dame. Liquid fire seemed even to float down the river.

The queen and the dauphin had scarcely disappeared in the city hall than they reappeared almost immediately on the balcony. The crowd repeated with enthusiasm the words, — whether uttered by Catherine or not, — “If the father dies in defending you, good people of the city of Paris, I bring you his son;” and at the sight of this son, who was to be poor little François II. of wretched memory, the crowd applauded, shouted, even yelled with joy. The queen remained on the balcony to keep alive the enthusiasm, leaving the Cardinal de Lorraine and Dandelot to make all necessary arrangements with the municipal authorities. In that she acted wisely; proper arrangements were made, and made wisely. “They [the cardinal and Dandelot] restored tranquillity to the hearts of the magistrates and principal burghers of the city of Paris,” says the Abbé Lambert, in his “History of Henri II.,” “relying on the love and tenderness of the king, who was ready to sacrifice his life, if need be, to save them from the dangers which threatened; they declared that, crushing as was the disaster which France had just suffered, the loss was not irreparable if only his Majesty should find in his faithful subjects the zeal which

they had hitherto manifested for the glory and the interests of the state. The royal commissioners added that the king, in order that his subjects should not be overwhelmed with their burdens, had not hesitated to pledge his private estates; but as this resource was exhausted, his Majesty must rely entirely on the voluntary aid which the love of his subjects would undoubtedly accord him; and the greater the need, the greater would be the efforts which the French people would make to put the king in a position to oppose his enemies with equal resources."

This harangue produced the effect anticipated; the city of Paris forthwith voted three hundred thousand livres for the first expenses of the war, and issued a manifesto inviting the principal cities of the kingdom to do likewise. As to the means of defence immediately required, — and we know that there was no time to lose, — Monsieur Dandelot proposed, first, that Monsieur de Guise and his army should be recalled from Italy, — this we know had been already determined on, and orders relative to their return had long since been issued; secondly, an army of thirty thousand French and twenty thousand foreigners was to be raised; lastly, the number of the men-at-arms and the light-horse was to be doubled.

To meet the enormous outlay rendered necessary by all this, at a time when the public treasury was exhausted and the royal patrimony "pledged," Dandelot proposed that the clergy, without the exception of a single benefice, should be desired to offer to the king, as a gift, a year's revenue; that the nobles, though by their privileges exempt from taxation, should each contribute to the extent of his abilities, — and Dandelot, setting the example, declared that he should reserve for his own use

and that of his brother the sum of two thousand crowns only, handing over to the king the remainder of the admiral's revenues and his own; lastly, a task for Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine, chancellor of the exchequer, the third estate of the realm was to be taxed according to the extreme of its resources. Poor third estate! they took care to demand from it a year's revenue, or rather to let it tax itself to that amount.

One part of these proposed measures was voted with enthusiasm; the other two adjourned. It is needless to say that the measures whose consideration was thus postponed related to the demands on the clergy and the nobles to contribute to the expenses of the raising and maintenance of the troops. But it was forthwith decided that forty thousand Swiss should be raised and eight thousand Germans enlisted, and that in every province of the kingdom companies should be formed of all the young men capable of bearing arms; in short, a good piece of business was done that night. By midnight all was finished; a few minutes after twelve the queen descended the steps of the city hall, holding Monsieur le Dauphin by the hand, who, half asleep, graciously saluted the crowd with his little velvet cap. At half-past one the queen re-entered the Louvre, able to say, exactly a hundred years before her fellow-countryman, Mazarin, "They have applauded; they will pay."

O people, people! it was nevertheless this weakness which revealed your power, this prodigality of your gold and your blood which testified to your riches! Those who lorded it over you, yet came back to you in this solemn moment when the haughtiest king and the proudest queen begged for your blood and your gold by the velvet cap of the heir-apparent to the crown!

CHAPTER X.

IN THE SPANISH CAMP.

WE have seen what the Duc de Nevers was doing at Laon; we have seen what King Henri was doing at Compiègne; we have seen, lastly, what Queen Catherine, the dauphin, and the Cardinal de Lorraine were doing at Paris. Now let us see what Philip II. and Emmanuel Philibert were doing in the Spanish camp, and how time was there lost which was put to such good use elsewhere.

First, as we have already said, the town of St. Quentin, as a consequence of its heroism, was given up to five days' pillage. This town, which by its long struggle had saved France, continued to save her by its long agony: the army which so ruthlessly destroyed the poor town, forgot that the rest of France still lived, and, aroused by the spectacle of its destruction, was organizing a desperate defence.

Let us then pass over those five days, — days of fire, of mourning, and of desolation, — and come to the 1st of September; and as in a preceding chapter we described the appearance of the town, we will with the same exactness describe the appearance of the camp. Everything there, since morning, had returned to its original order. Each man counted his prisoners, examined his booty, made up his inventory, and either laughed over what he had gained or wept over what he had lost.

At eleven in the morning a council was to be held in the tent of the King of Spain. This tent was situated at

the extreme end of the camp ; we have explained why, — the music of French bullets being, as he himself avowed, peculiarly disagreeable to the ears of Philip II.

Let us begin with the chief men in the army, and see what was passing in this tent. The king held in his hand an open letter which he had just received, black with gunpowder, which a messenger, seated on a stone seat at the entrance to the royal tent, had brought. A servant of the king was pouring out a glass of wine for this messenger, whose golden color betrayed its southern origin. This letter, which was sealed with a large red wax seal representing weapons surmounted by a mitre and flanked by two crosses, seemed strangely to engross the attention of Philip II. At the moment when for the third or fourth time he had re-read this important missive, the gallop of a horse stopping hurriedly at the entrance to the royal tent made the king raise his head, and under his blinking eyelids his dull eyes seemed to ask for the man who was actuated by a desire of seeing him in such haste. After a few seconds the tapestry which closed the entrance to the tent was raised, and one of the royal servants, who carried even into the heart of the camp the etiquette of the palaces of Burgos and of Valladolid, announced, —

“His Excellency Don Luis de Vargas, secretary of Monseigneur le Duc d’Albe.”

Philip uttered a cry of joy ; then, as if ashamed of yielding to this first impression, imposed on himself silence for a moment, and in a voice in which it was impossible to distinguish the least trace of emotion, agreeable or disagreeable, he said, —

“Let Don Luis de Vargas come in.” Whereupon Don Luis entered.

The messenger was covered with perspiration and dust ;

the pallor on his face indicated fatigue from a long ride ; the foam which covered his horse, and which was splashed over his riding-boots, showed how hard he had ridden. Nevertheless, when the announcement was made, he remained standing, motionless, hat in hand, at ten paces from the king, waiting until he had the latter's permission to address him and tell his tidings.

This submission to the law of etiquette — first of all laws in Spain — seemed to satisfy the king ; and with a smile as indistinct as a sunbeam shining through a gray cloud in autumn, he said, —

“May God be with you, Don Luis de Vargas ! What are your news from Italy ?”

“Good and bad at the same time, Sire,” replied Don Luis. “We are masters in Italy, but Monsieur de Guise is returning in all haste with a portion of the French army.”

“Does the Duke of Alva send you to announce this news to me, Don Luis ?”

“Yes, Sire ; and he directed me to take the shortest road, and to use all diligence, so that I might arrive in France twelve days at least before Monsieur de Guise. Consequently, I embarked in a galley at Ostia, landed at Genoa, came by way of Switzerland, Strasburg, Metz, and Mezières, and am happy to say that I have accomplished this long journey in fourteen days, whereas I am sure that it will take the Duc de Guise at least double as many to reach Paris.”

“Certainly you have shown great diligence, Don Luis, and I have no doubt that you have accomplished your journey in the shortest possible time. But have you no private letter from the Duke of Alva for me ?”

“Sire, the duke, fearing lest I should be captured, did not dare to risk intrusting me with anything in writing ;

but he directed me to repeat these words: 'Let his Majesty the King of Spain remember King Tarquin, who used to beat down the tallest poppies in his garden. Nothing ought to grow too high in king's gardens, not even princes.' Your Majesty, he added, would understand perfectly well what those words import, and who is referred to by them."

"Yes," murmured the king, "yes, I see there the prudence of my faithful Alvarez. I do understand, Don Luis, and I thank him. For yourself, go and take the rest which you so much need, and see that my servants provide you with all that is necessary."

Don Luis de Vargas bowed and withdrew, and the tapestry closed behind him.

We will now leave King Philip II. to meditate at his leisure over the letter with the episcopal arms, and over the verbal message of the Duke of Alva, and pay a visit to another tent, situated about gun-shot from it, — namely, that of Emmanuel Philibert.

Emmanuel Philibert was leaning over a camp-bed where a wounded man was lying; a surgeon was removing the dressing from a wound which seemed to be nothing more than a contusion on the left side of his breast, but which, judging by the pallor and weakness of the patient, seemed to be very severe. However, the surgeon's face seemed to brighten after examining the livid patch, frightful to look at, which one would say was caused by a stone hurled from an ancient catapult.

The sufferer was none other than our old friend, Scianca-Ferro, whom we were not able to follow in the assault on the town, of which we tried to give an account. But we find the brave squire again, in the tent of the Duke of Savoy, on that bed of suffering which, to deceive the poor soldier, has so frequently been called the bed of glory.

"Well?" anxiously asked Emmanuel Philibert.

"Better, much better, my lord," replied the surgeon; "and now the patient is out of danger."

"I told you so, Emmanuel," broke in Scianca-Ferro, in a voice which he tried to make strong and firm, but which, despite his efforts, was husky. "Really, you humiliate me by treating me as you would treat an old woman, and all because of a little bit of a bruise."

"A 'bit of a bruise' which has broken one of your ribs, staved in two others, and made you spit blood with every breath you have taken for the last six days!"

"It is true the blow was well delivered," replied the patient, trying to smile. "Pass me the implement in question."

Emmanuel looked for what Scianca-Ferro described under the title of the "implement in question," and went to pick up, in a corner of the tent, an object which was unmistakably an implement, — an implement of war. Strong as he was, the prince could scarcely lift this object, and with some trouble he carried it to and laid it on Scianca-Ferro's bed. It was a twelve-pound ball, with an iron bar attached; the whole might perhaps weigh from twenty-five to thirty pounds.

"*Corpo di Bacco!*" gayly cried the patient. "Confess, Emmanuel, that that is a charming plaything. And what has been done with the gentleman who played so deftly with it?"

"According to your orders, nothing has been done with him. We asked him for his parole not to escape, and he has given it. He is most likely, as usual, not very far from the tent, sighing and weeping, his hands covering his face."

"Yes, poor fellow! According to what you have told me, I clove his nephew's head to the ears, — a worthy

German, who swore well, but fought better. *Ma foi!* if there had been only ten men like those fellows at every breach, it would have been something like the famous war of the Titans which you used to tell me about when you construed that horrible Greek which I never could master, and carrying a breach would have been as difficult as climbing up Pelion or Ossa." Then, listening, he said: "*Mordieu!* Emmanuel, there is some one trying to get up a quarrel with my worthy German. I hear his voice. There must be something very serious the matter; for they say that for the last five days he has not opened his mouth."

And indeed sounds as of quarrelling reached the ears of the patient and his attendants, with a threefold accompaniment of oaths in Spanish, Picard, and German.

Emmanuel left Scianca-Ferro in the care of the surgeon, and, to please him, went out to discover the causes of this quarrel which had suddenly degenerated into a brawl.

Now, at the moment when, like Virgil's Neptune, Emmanuel Philibert uttered the *quos ego* which calmed the agitated waves, the battlefield presented a curious appearance. First (we beg our readers' pardon, but, as the peasants of Picardy, whom we are about to revisit, say, "with all due respect to those to whom it is due"), the principal personage in the squabble was a donkey, — a magnificent donkey, loaded with cabbages, carrots, and lettuces, kicking and braying in a surprising manner, and scattering with all his might his vegetables around him. After the donkey, unquestionably the most important person was our friend Heinrich Scharfenstein, hitting out to right and left with a tent-pole which he had pulled out of the ground, and with which he had already floored seven or eight Flemish soldiers. He had a look of pro-

found melancholy on his features ; but, as was evident, this melancholy lessened in no respect the vigor of his arm. After Heinrich came a young and handsome peasant-girl, ruddy-cheeked and strong, who was pommelling with all her might a Spanish soldier, who in all probability had tried to take liberties with her. Then, lastly, was seen the probable owner of the donkey, — a peasant, who, grumbling, picked up his cabbages, carrots, and lettuces, to which the soldiers who stood around him seemed exceedingly partial.

The sudden appearance of Emmanuel Philibert, as we have already said, had the same effect on the bystanders as the Medusa's head was fabled to have in the ancient story : the soldiers dropped the carrots, lettuces, and cabbages which they had appropriated ; the girl released the Spanish soldier, who incontinently fled, his mustache half plucked out by the roots, and his nose bloody ; the donkey ceased kicking and braying. Heinrich Scharfenstein alone, like an engine set in motion with too much impetus to be stopped immediately, continued to flourish his tent-pole, and floored two or three more of the soldiers.

“What is the matter?” asked Emmanuel Philibert, “and why are you handling these men so roughly?”

“Ah ! is it you, Monseigneur ? I shall tell your Highness how it happened,” said the peasant in the Picard dialect, approaching the prince, his arms filled with cabbages, carrots, and lettuces, and holding the brim of his hat between his teeth, as if to make his dialect even less intelligible.

“The deuce !” muttered Emmanuel Philibert ; then aloud he said, “I fear I shall have some trouble in understanding you, my friend. Italian is my mother-tongue, and I speak Spanish passably, French fairly

well, and German a little; but I do not know a word of the Picard dialect."

"No matter I am nevertheless going to tell you what has just occurred. You see, a rude fellow just rushed up to me, and my donkey as well, and my daughter too."

"My friends," said Emmanuel Philibert, "is there any one among you who can translate into French, Spanish, Italian, or German what this man is complaining about?"

"In French? Why, there is my daughter Yvonnette, who has boarded in the Rue Somme-Rouche, in St. Quentin; she can talk French to you like a curé. Speak to him, Yvonnette, speak!" continued the peasant, in his execrable jargon.

The young girl came forward timidly, trying to blush.

"My lord," said she, "excuse my father, but he comes from the village of Savy, where the Picard dialect alone is spoken, and — you understand."

"Yes," said Emmanuel, smiling, "I understand that I do not understand."

"Truly," muttered the peasant, "these people must be stupider than dogs not to understand Picard."

"Hush, Father!" said the girl. Then, turning toward the prince, she explained: "This is what has happened, my lord; yesterday we heard in our village that in consequence of the ravages which have been made in the fields all around by the recent fighting, and because the soldiers from Le Catelet, which still holds out for King Henri, stop all convoys from Cambrai, you would need fresh provisions in the camp, and especially vegetables, even for the King of Spain's table, and your own, my lord."

"Now, that is indeed good news," said Emmanuel Philibert. "You are right, my dear. Without being

absolutely short of provisions, we have by no means what we should like ; vegetables especially are rare."

"Yes," said the peasant, who seemed unwilling to leave the matter entirely in the hands of his daughter, "I said yesterday to myself, 'See!'"

"My friend," interrupted the prince, "let your daughter do the talking, if it is all the same to you ; we shall both be the gainers."

"Good ; go on, yes, go on."

"So that yesterday Father said, 'See, if I took the donkey and loaded him with cabbages, carrots, and lettuces, and we took them to the camp, perhaps the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy would be pleased to have some fresh vegetables.'"

"I thought, *pardiè*, that if our cow, who has no more sense than another beast, enjoyed eating fresh grass, why should not fresh vegetables please a king and a prince?"

"If I had to listen to you very long, my friend," said Emmanuel Philibert, smiling, "I believe I should soon be able to understand you ; but if you don't mind, I would rather talk with your daughter than with you. Go on, my dear."

"So that this morning, at daybreak," continued the girl, "we went into the garden and gathered the freshest and best vegetables we could find, loaded the donkey with them, and came here. Surely we have not done wrong, my lord?"

"On the contrary, my dear, a very lucky thought occurred to you."

"So we thought, my lord. But we had scarcely got into the camp than your men went for our poor donkey. It was in vain that my father said, 'But they are for his Majesty the King of Spain and for the Duke of Savoy ;'

they paid no attention to him. So we began to call for help, and the donkey to bray ; but notwithstanding our cries and Cadet's braying, we should have been robbed — besides what might have happened to me — if that brave man there, who has just gone and sat down, had not come to our help, and done what you see."

"Yes, a terrible piece of business!" said Emmanuel Philibert, shaking his head. "Two men dead, and four or five severely hurt, for a few miserable vegetables. But no matter, his intention was good. Moreover, he is under the protection of one of my friends ; so it is all right."

"Then, my lord, we shall suffer no harm for coming to the camp?" timidly asked the girl, whom her father had called Yvonne.

"No, my dear, quite the contrary."

"Because, my lord," continued the young peasant, "we are tired, having come five leagues to the camp, and we wish to return as soon as the day gets cooler."

"You may go as soon as you like," said the prince ; "and as good intentions ought to be rewarded as well as good deeds, and where possible in preference, here are three gold crowns for the donkey-load which you have brought." Then, turning toward one of his attendants whom their curiosity had led thither, he said, "Gaetano, you will see that these provisions are delivered into the charge of the king's servants ; then you will provide these good people with the best that you have for their refreshment, at the same time taking care that they are exposed to no insult."

Then, as the time for the council to be held in the royal tent was at hand, and as the different commanders began to repair thither from every part of the camp, Emmanuel Philibert went into his own tent, to satisfy

himself that Scianca-Ferro's wound was dressed ; and he was so preoccupied by this that he did not notice the cunning smile which the peasant and his daughter exchanged with an ill-looking fellow who was scouring the armor of the Constable de Montmorency with all his might.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH YVONNET GATHERS ALL THE INFORMATION
HE DESIRES.

THE pretext—if it was a pretext—which the Picard peasant and his daughter had made use of to get into the Spanish camp was chosen with great skill; as we have seen, Emmanuel Philibert highly appreciated the consideration shown by the market-gardener in bringing fresh vegetables for himself and the king. And in truth, if Mergey—squire to Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld, who was taken prisoner at the battle of St. Lawrence's Day, and carried the same evening to the Spanish camp—is to be believed, the table of the Duke of Savoy was not overstocked at this time. Mergey himself at first was reduced to drinking water,—contrary to his custom, and much to his disgust. To be sure, his master, Monsieur le Comte de la Rochefoucauld, fared no better. "There was but one dish for seven of us who sat at table," says this same Mergey, so grieved at being compelled to drink nothing but water,—"a piece of tough beef which is put into a vessel filled with water, without either salt, bacon, or vegetables; and when all are seated at table, little tin plates are passed around, into which the soup is poured; then the beef is divided into as many pieces as there are men at table, and eaten with very little bread." It is not surprising, then, when we see to what the leaders were reduced, that the private soldiers, still worse off, rushed at the donkey loaded with

vegetables, which last they would have carried completely off, notwithstanding the efforts of Heinrich Scharfenstein, of the peasant, and of his daughter, had not Emmanuel Philibert, hearing the uproar, interfered and stopped the affray.

Although under the special protection of Gaetano, the peasant, and especially his daughter, seemed to be long in recovering from the terror into which they had just been plunged ; but the donkey was of a less excitable temperament, and finding himself once more at liberty, he began cheerfully to eat up the different vegetables which in the heat of the struggle had been scattered over the ground. It was not till the peasant and his daughter had seen Emmanuel Philibert for a second time leave his tent, start off, and disappear in the direction of that of the king, that they seemed to recover their assurance, — though, considering what had just happened, it might reasonably have been supposed that they would have preferred his presence to his absence. But no one seemed to notice this peculiarity, except the man who was polishing the constable's cuirass, who watched, with an anxiety equal to theirs, the prince repair to the royal tent. In the mean time Heinrich Scharfenstein went and sat down again on the seat which he had left to go to the aid of the two victims of the brutality of the Spanish soldiers, and once more gave way to the profound melancholy which seemed completely to overcome him.

Some inquisitive bystanders still hung round the peasant and his daughter, and seemed greatly to embarrass them, when Gaetano rescued them from their difficulty by inviting them to enter, donkey and all, into the enclosed field, surrounded by palings, which was in the rear of the Duke of Savoy's tent. There the donkey was eased of his precious load ; after which the peasant

received from Gaetano a piece of bread, some cold meat, and a pitcher of wine, — more than was given, you will remember, to the Comte de la Rochefoucauld and the six squires, his fellow prisoners. Then the peasant and his daughter — doubtless that they should not be exposed to any fresh insult by arousing the greediness of the soldiers — left the enclosed field, taking all possible precautions, looking to the right and to the left, to make sure that none of the men who had manifested so much curiosity and interest in them were in sight.

There was, however, on the spot where the *mêlée* had taken place — whence the dead and wounded had been removed while Emmanuel Philibert was present — only the constable's armorer, who polished away at his armor more diligently than ever, and Heinrich Scharfenstein, who had not stirred during the absence of the peasant and his daughter. Yvonnette made for a small shed which stood a little distance off; while her father, grateful for the service which the giant had rendered them, went to invite Heinrich Scharfenstein to share the food with which the duke's kindness had provided them; but Heinrich shook his head, and said, with a deep sigh, —

“I have never been hungry since Frantz's death.”

The peasant gazed sadly at Heinrich, and after exchanging a glance with the constable's armorer, he rejoined his daughter, who had made a table of a box full of oats, and who, seated on a truss of straw, awaited the author of her being. Scarcely had they begun their meal than a shadow appeared over the improvised table; it was that of the indefatigable polisher.

“The deuce,” said he, “what luxury! I have a good mind to fetch Monsieur le Connétable to dine with us.”

“Ah, *ma foi!*” said the peasant, in excellent French, “he would soon eat up this small affair himself.”

"Besides not forgetting that a maid of honor runs great risks, in popular estimation, in the company of an old veteran."

"Yes, much you care about veterans, whether old or young! Ah, *mordieu!* what a beautiful right-hander that was you gave that Spaniard who wanted to kiss you! I had begun to suspect who you were before; but that blow between the eyes satisfied me as to your identity. But why on earth do you fellows run the risk of being hanged as spies in the camp of these barefooted Spaniards?"

"First, we wished to hear what news we could of you, my dear Pilletrousse, and of our companions," said the peasant woman.

"You are too kind, Mademoiselle Yvonnette; and if you will have the goodness to fill this third glass, which you seem to have brought here for my special benefit, we will first drink to the health of your servant, which is not in poor condition, as you see, and then to that of our other companions, who unfortunately are not all as well as we seem to be."

"And I," said Yvonnnet, — for no doubt our readers have recognized the adventurer, notwithstanding the disguise which he had assumed and the syllable he has added to his name, — "will in my turn tell you what I propose to do here; and you will help me to carry out my design." And handing Pilletrousse a full glass, Yvonnnet, not without anxiety, waited for the expected news.

"Ah," said Pilletrousse, with that smack of the lips which with intelligent drinkers is nearly always the funeral oration pronounced over the glass of wine which they have just drunk, especially when the wine is good, — "ah, it is pleasant to meet an old friend!"

"Do you refer to the wine or to me?" said Yvonnnet.

"To both. But to return to our companions: here is Maldent, who, first, ought to be able to give you all the information you can desire in regard to Procope, Lactance, and himself; for," added Pilletrousse, "I have heard it reported that you were buried together."

"Yes," replied Maldent; "and I ought to add that, to our great disgust, we remained in the sepulchre two days longer than our Saviour Jésus Christ."

"But you arose from it with glory, — that is the chief thing. And how did the worthy Jacobins entertain you during your sojourn in the abode of the dead?"

"With their very best, — we must do them that justice; and no dead men, not even the husband of the matron of Ephesus, were ever objects of greater care."

"And did the Spaniards never pay you a visit in your cavern?"

"We heard two or three times the sound of their footsteps on the staircase; but seeing only the long row of tombs lit by a single lamp, they went back again. And I believe that if they had come down, and the idea had occurred to them to raise the covering of the vault, they would have been more afraid than we."

"Good! that accounts for three, and even for four, as I see that you are all right, and polishing the constable's armor."

"Yes, you will easily conjecture that, thanks to my knowledge of Spanish, I passed for a friend of the conquerors; so I slipped in unperceived to the tent of Monseigneur, and resumed my task interrupted a fortnight before; and as no one had troubled himself about my departure, so no one troubled about my return."

"But how about Frantz?"

"Look how poor Heinrich weeps! You may easily guess what has become of Frantz."

"How on earth could such a giant be killed by a man?" asked Yvonnet, with a deep sigh; for the reader will remember what tender affection bound the two Germans to the youngest of the adventurers.

"Why," replied Pilletrouse, "he was not killed by a man, but by a devil incarnate who is called 'Iron-breaker,' — squire, foster-brother, and friend of the Duke of Savoy. This 'Iron-breaker,' known otherwise as Scianca-Ferro, furiously attacked the nephew, who had already killed at least twenty men. Frantz, who was rather tired, failed to parry the blow which Scianca-Ferro aimed at him; and the sword cut through his helmet, and laid open the skull to the eyes. It must be said in praise of Frantz that his cranium was so hard that, notwithstanding all his efforts, Scianca-Ferro was unable to get the sword out again. While he was thus struggling to recover his weapon, the uncle chanced to turn, and saw what had happened. It was at once clear to him that he had not time to go to his nephew's aid, so he hurled his mace with all his might at the latter's antagonist. The weapon flew straight to the mark, and staved in Scianca-Ferro's cuirass and even his ribs; but it was too late. Frantz fell on one side, and Scianca-Ferro on the other, — only Frantz fell without speaking a word, while Scianca-Ferro had just time in falling to say, 'Let no one hurt the man who has just hurled his mace at my ribs. If I recover, I want to cultivate the acquaintance of that worthy catapult.' He immediately fainted; but his wish has been religiously carried out. Heinrich Scharfenstein was taken alive, — which was not difficult, since when he saw his nephew fall he went straight to him, sat down at the breach, drew the sword from the skull, took off the helmet, and laid the head on his knees without paying attention to what was passing around him. Now, as he and his nephew

held out the last, the fight had ceased, since the nephew was dead, and the uncle seated, deploring him. He was immediately surrounded, and asked to surrender; at the same time he was promised that no harm should be done to him. 'Shall I be separated from the body of my child?' he asked. 'No,' was the reply. 'Very well, then I surrender; do with me as you will.' And he forthwith yielded, took the body of Frantz in his arms, followed his captors, who led him as far as the Duke of Savoy's tent, watched the body a day and a night, dug a grave by the river-side, buried it, and, faithful to his promise not to escape, returned and seated himself where you found him; only, it is said, since the death of Frantz he has neither eaten nor drunk."

"Poor Heinrich!" said Yvonnet; while Maldent, whether his heart was less susceptible, or whether he wanted to prevent the conversation assuming too gloomy a character, asked, —

"And Malemort, — I trust that this time he has come to an end worthy of his fame?"

"Well," replied Piletrousse, "this time you have made a mistake. Malemort received two new wounds, which with the old ones make twenty-six, all told; and as he was taken up as dead — and this time as really dead — he was thrown into the river. But it would seem that the coolness of the water brought him to; for as I was taking the constable's horse to the Somme to drink, I heard some one groaning, went to see who it was, and recognized Malemort."

"Who was simply waiting for a friend, in order to die in his arms?"

"By no means. Who simply waited for a shoulder to lean against, and thus to return to life, as our poet Fra-

casso would have said, — the only one of whom I am unable to give you tidings.”

“Ah, well,” said Yvonnet, still shuddering, “he was kind enough to give me news of himself and in person.” And Yvonnet related, not without growing pale, though it was now broad daylight, his experiences of the night of the 27th and 28th of August.

He had just got to the end of his story when a great commotion announced that the council which had been held in the King of Spain's tent had broken up. All the leaders of the allied army therefore returned to their respective quarters, on their way calling for their servants and squires, as though in haste to see that the directions which they had just received should be instantly carried out. All appeared to be in an exceedingly bad humor. A moment later Emmanuel Philibert also was seen leaving, like the others, the royal tent; only he seemed to be in a worse temper even than the others.

“Gaetano,” cried he to his major-domo as soon as he saw him, “give orders that the camp be broken up immediately.”

This direction of course indicated departure, but left our adventurers completely in the dark as to what direction the Spanish army would take. In all probability Paris was threatened; but by which route would the enemy march on Paris? Would he go by Ham and Noyon, through Picardy, following the course of the Somme, or by Laon and Soissons, through the Ile-de-France; or, lastly, by Châlons, through Champagne? These three routes, we know, — with the exception of a small force at Laon under the Duc de Nevers, and the fortresses of Ham and La Fère, which could be easily turned, — would present no obstacle to the Spanish army. It was of the greatest

consequence to Yvonnet to know which of these three routes the allied army would take.

Pilletrousse saw at once the urgency of the situation ; he seized the wine-pitcher, nearly two thirds empty, and drinking from that, so as not to lose time, he soon emptied it, and then began to run to the constable's tent, hoping there to get some information. The pretended peasants, under pretence of keeping their donkey out of the confusion, so that it should not be considered one of the beasts of burden attached to the royal army, returned to the space near Emmanuel Philibert's tent and waited — Maldent holding Cadet by the bridle, and Yvonnet, one foot on each panier, seated astride of the pack-saddle — until some imprudent utterance of the servants should give them the information which they sought.

They had not long to wait. Gaetano was hurrying out, bewildered, to give the directions to the muleteers, grooms, and ostlers which he had received, when he suddenly saw the supposed peasant and his daughter.

"Ah ! are you still here, my good people ?" said he.

"Yes," replied Yvonnnette, the only one who was supposed to understand French ; "my father is waiting to know whither hereafter he is to carry his vegetables."

"Of course ; he will be able to do a good business, it would seem ! Well, let him repair to Le Catelet, which we are about to besiege."

"Thanks, my boy ! Only it will be a long tramp for the donkey ; but never mind, all the same we will go to Le Catelet," said the peasant in Picard.

"To Le Catelet !" repeated Yvonnnette, below her breath. "*Mordiêu !* they are going to turn their backs on Paris. Splendid news for King Henri II. !"

Five minutes afterward the two adventurers gained, by the help of the causeway, the left bank of the Somme ;

an hour later, Yvonnet, disencumbered of his peasant-girl's costume, and attired as heretofore, was galloping along the road to La Fère. At three o'clock in the afternoon he rode into the courtyard of the castle of Compiègne, waving his cap and crying out, —

“ Good news, splendid news ! Paris is saved ! ”

CHAPTER XII.

GOD PROTECTS FRANCE.

It was indeed true. From the moment that Philip II. and Emmanuel Philibert determined not to march immediately on Paris, the city was saved. How was it possible that such a blunder should be made? In consequence of the irresolute and suspicious nature of the King of Spain, or rather by the special favor which in critical situations God ever accords to France.

Our readers will remember the letter which King Philip was reading at the time that Don Luis de Vargas, secretary to the Duke of Alva, arrived from Rome. This letter was from the Bishop of Arras, one of the privy councillors of Philip II., in whom this prince, usually so distrustful, had the greatest confidence. Philip II. had sent a messenger to ask his advice in regard to what was to be done after the battle of St. Lawrence's, and especially after the capture of St. Quentin, if St. Quentin, as seemed probable, fell into the hands of the allies. The bishop, as might have been anticipated, replied as a churchman, not as a soldier.

Cardinal Granvelle, in his collection of state papers, has preserved this letter for us, which was of such great importance to the destinies of France. We shall content ourselves with quoting the following passage,—the passage which Philip was reading with so much attention when the entrance of Don Luis de Vargas interrupted him :—

“It would not be wise to attempt further operations against the French during this year, the present season as well as the nature of the country being unfavorable to them ; to follow up the advantages already gained would be to risk losing them, together with the prestige of the Spanish arms. The better course would be to carry fire and sword into the enemy's lands beyond the Somme.”

The Bishop of Arras therefore advised the Spanish king, notwithstanding the victory won on St. Lawrence's Day, and the capture of St. Quentin, not to advance farther into the heart of France. Moreover, however much others might puzzle over it, the counsel of the Duke of Alva was quite clearly understood by Philip : “Sire, remember Tarquin, who struck down with his wand the tallest poppies in his garden.” Such was the advice of this soldier-statesman, whose dark and sombre genius accorded so well with the suspicious disposition of the successor of Charles V. that the divine wrath seemed to have fashioned Philip II. for the Duke of Alva, and the Duke of Alva for Philip II.

Now, the poppy whose head was already towering above all others, — was it not Emmanuel Philibert ? Undoubtedly, if it had grown so rapidly, it was on fields of battle that it began to shoot, and glory watered its roots ; but the greater the prestige which clung to the Duke of Savoy, the more that prestige was to be feared. If, after the victory gained on St. Lawrence's, and the fall of St. Quentin, the Spaniards should march on Paris, and if in its turn Paris should fall into the hands of Emmanuel Philibert, what recompense would so great service not demand ? Would it be enough to give back to the son of Duke Charles the estates of which the father had been deprived ? Moreover, would it be to the interest of Philip, who held a portion of them, to

surrender them? Once Piedmont was restored to him, what assurance was there that he would not seize Milan, and after Milan the kingdom of Naples, — those two appanages of the Crown of Spain in Italy, which had already, by the double claim which France made to them, cost Louis XII. and François I. so much blood and treasure, and yet which those kings were unable to hold? How was it that neither Louis XII. nor François I. had been able to keep possession of their respective conquests, — the one having captured Naples, and the other Milan? It is because they were foreigners; because, having no popular support, they were compelled to go beyond the mountains for their means of conquest. But would it not be quite otherwise for a prince who relied for his support on the inhabitants of the eastern slope of the Alps, and who spoke the language of the Milanese and the Neapolitans? Would not this man be a liberator for Italy rather than a conqueror?

Such was the gigantic phantom which, like the giant of the Cape of Good Hope, rose between St. Quentin and Paris. Consequently, against the general opinion of the council, and especially that of Emmanuel Philibert, who advised an immediate march on Paris, so that no time should be left to Henri II. to recover, Philip announced that the victorious army would not make one step forward, but would content itself for that campaign with laying siege to Le Catelet, Ham, and Chauny, while the walls of St. Quentin should be rebuilt, and the town be made a base of support for future Spanish conquests.

This was the news — not in all its details, but with all the probabilities arising from it — which Yvonnet carried to Henri II., and which made him shout with such great assurance, “Paris is saved!”

On the receipt of this astounding intelligence, to which

Henri could not give complete credence, fresh orders were issued in every direction, — between Compiègne and Laon, between Laon and Paris, and between Paris and the Alps. A decree was issued to the effect that all soldiers, nobles, or men of any class who had once borne or were capable of bearing arms, should repair to Laon and report to Monsieur de Nevers, lieutenant-general of the king, under pain of corporal punishment, and abolition of all right to the title of noble.

Dandelot was directed to depart immediately for the French cantons of Switzerland, and to hasten the levying of forty thousand Swiss troops, whose enrolment had already been decreed; while two German colonels, Rockrod and Reiffenberg, led across Alsace and Lorraine forty thousand men raised by them in the Rhine provinces. In addition to these armies, information had been received that eight thousand men of the army of Italy had just recrossed the Alps, and were hastening forward by forced marches. At the same time, and as if entirely to remove the fears of Henri, — who, although the enemy had moved in the direction of Noyon, had not left Compiègne, — reports of the breaking out of dissensions between the Spaniards and the English at the siege of Le Catelet reached the French headquarters.

The English, offended by the haughty demeanor of the Spaniards, who arrogated to themselves all the honor of the victory of St. Lawrence's, and claimed all the credit of the capture of St. Quentin, asked permission to withdraw. Instead of trying to reconcile the parties, Philip II., with his Spanish predilections, upheld his own countrymen, and signified his willingness to allow the departure of the English; and permission was forthwith granted. Eight days afterward, the German auxiliaries, angry that the king and Emmanuel Philibert should

alone take the ransoms of the prisoners captured at St. Quentin, became riotous in their turn. As a result of this dissension, three thousand Germans deserted from the Spanish army, and being immediately engaged by the Duc de Nevers, passed from the service of the King of Spain to that of the King of France.

The rendezvous of all these troops was the town of Compiègne, which Monsieur de Nevers caused to be fortified with extreme care, and under the guns of which he had an encampment traced out which was spacious enough to hold a hundred thousand men.

At length, about the last of September, the report was suddenly spread throughout Paris that François de Guise had arrived post-haste from Italy. The next morning a magnificent cavalcade, headed by the duke himself, having the Cardinal de Lorraine at his right, Monsieur de Nemours at his left, and behind him two hundred gentlemen of his house, left the Hôtel de Guise, repaired to the fortifications, and returning by the quays to the city hall, aroused the enthusiasm of the Parisians, who believed that they had nothing more to fear since the return of their well-beloved duke. The same evening it was proclaimed in all the public squares of Paris that Monsieur le Duc François de Guise was named lieutenant-general of the kingdom.

In this appointment it may be said that King Henri II. committed a grave error, thereby disregarding the charge laid on him by his father on the latter's deathbed, to regard it as his first principle not to raise too high the house of Guise; but the situation was critical, and the wise counsel was neglected.

On the morrow, which was the 29th of September, the duke set off for Compiègne; and on the same day, as the first exercise of the power so recently intrusted to him,

reviewed the army assembled, as though by a miracle, in the intrenched camp.

On the 10th of August, in the evening, there were in the whole kingdom, garrisons included, perhaps ten thousand men capable of bearing arms ; and these so demoralized that at the first cannon-shot they were ready, those in the open field to flee, and those in towns to open their gates. On the 30th of September the Duc de Guise reviewed an army of nearly fifty thousand men ; that is to say, a third greater than that of the Spanish king after his quarrel with the English contingent and the defection of the German contingent. This army was in fine condition and full of enthusiasm, and with loud cries demanded to be led against the enemy.

Thrice fortunate land, where the ground has only to be struck in the name of the king or of the nation, for armies immediately to rise from it, as though by magic!

At length, on the 26th of October, it was learned that Philip II., followed by the Duke of Savoy and the court, had left Cambrai to return to Brussels, thus showing that he regarded the campaign as at an end. Then every one could say, not only as Yvonnet had said as he entered the courtyard of Compiègne, "Splendid news, — Paris is saved !" but, better still, "Splendid news, — France is saved !"

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

A REMEMBRANCE AND A PROMISE.

A YEAR has elapsed since King Philip II., by withdrawing from Cambrai to Brussels, and thus declaring the campaign of 1557 at an end, caused twenty-five millions of men to exclaim with joy, "France is saved!" Our readers know how ignoble were the motives which in all probability prevented his continuing his victorious career; we shall soon find at the court of Henri II. a counterpart, fatal in its results, to the purely selfish determination of Philip, which, as we have seen, caused so great chagrin to Emmanuel Philibert, — a chagrin the greater since he had no difficulty in divining the cause of the king's staying the march of his victorious army; though to some modern historians it has seemed as inexplicable as to the ancients was the famous sojourn of Hannibal at Capua.

In the mean time during this year (1558) certain great events have occurred which it is our duty to relate to the reader, of which unquestionably the most important was the recovery of Calais from the English by François de Guise. After the fatal battle of Cressy, which brought France as near ruin as that of St. Quentin did later, Edward III. attacked Calais by both land and sea, — by sea with a fleet of eighty sail, and by land with an army of thirty thousand men. Although defended by an insufficient garri-

son, — under the command, however, of Jean de Vienne, one of the bravest warriors of his time, — Calais did not surrender until after a siege which lasted a year, nor until its inhabitants had eaten the last piece of leather which was to be found in the town. From that time — that is to say, for two hundred and ten years — the English determined, as to-day at Gibraltar, to make Calais impregnable; and believing that they had succeeded, toward the end of the preceding century had caused the following inscription to be engraved over the principal gate of the town: —

“Calais, après trois cent quatre vingts jours de siège,
Fut, sur Valois vaincu, prise par les Anglais;
Quand le plomb nagera sur l'eau comme le liège,
Les Valois reprendront sur les Anglais Calais.”¹

Now this town, which it had taken the English three hundred and eighty days to capture from Philippe de Valois, and which the successors of the conqueror of Cassel, of the conquered of Cressy, were not to recapture until lead should swim in water like cork, the Duc de Guise — not even by a regular siege, but by a sort of *coup-de-main*, — retook in eight days. Then, after the fall of Calais, the same general recaptured Guines and Ham, and the Duc de Nevers, Herbermont; and in these four towns the English and the Spaniards left three hundred brass and two hundred and ninety iron cannon.

Perhaps it will surprise our readers somewhat to find that when we tell of the deeds of the warriors who did their best to repair the losses of the year before, we omit to mention, — not the constable and Coligny; we

¹ “After a siege lasting three hundred and eighty days Calais was captured from the defeated Valois by the English. When lead shall swim in water like cork, then shall the Valois recapture Calais from the English.”

know that they were prisoners, — but that of Dandelot, not less illustrious, above all not less French. The name of Dandelot was in truth the only one which could be uttered in the same breath with that of the Duc de Guise ; in genius and courage the two men were peers, — a fact which was clearly recognized by the Cardinal de Lorraine, who was so entirely absorbed in the success of his own family, resting everything on his brother, that he was capable even of a crime to remove a man who should stand in the way of that success. Now, to share the royal friendship and the gratitude of France with the Duc de Guise was, in the eyes of the Cardinal, to be a hindrance to the fortunes of that haughty house, the chiefs of which were soon to claim the right of refusing precedence to the kings of France, claiming equality, — an equality with which in all probability they would not have been content had not Henri III. thirty years later destroyed, by the poniards of the Forty-five, this power so imprudently allowed by Henri II. to grow.

Since the constable and the admiral were prisoners, there was only one man, as we have said, who could cause anxiety to the Cardinal de Lorraine, — Dandelot ; from the moment he first felt that anxiety the cardinal determined on his destruction. Now, Dandelot was a firm believer in the Reformed religion ; and as he was desirous of making a proselyte of his brother, who still wavered, he sent him some Genevese books at Antwerp, where he was still detained a prisoner by the King of Spain, together with a letter in which he tried to induce him to forsake the errors of Rome for the light which shone from Geneva. This letter of Dandelot's fell unfortunately into the hands of the cardinal.

At the period of which we are speaking, Protestants

in France were persecuted most cruelly. Several times already Dandelot had been accused to the king of the crime of heresy; but the latter refused to believe the charge, or at least pretended not to believe it, so great was his unwillingness to banish from court a man who had been attached to the royal household since his seventh year, and who had shown his gratitude for the king's friendship by such great and substantial services in the field. But before this evidence of heresy the king could no longer pretend to doubt. Nevertheless, Henri declared that in a matter so grave he would be satisfied with nothing — not even the writing of Dandelot itself — save an explicit confession from the lips of the accused; therefore he resolved to question him before the whole court in regard to his new faith.

But the king was unwilling to take Dandelot by surprise; so he invited Cardinal de Châtillon, his brother, and François de Montmorency, his cousin, to meet him at the queen's country-seat, near Meaux, where the king was then staying, in order that Dandelot might have full opportunity publicly to exculpate himself. The latter was therefore invited by François de Montmorency and the cardinal to repair to Monceaux — the name by which the queen's country-seat was known — and prepare his defence, unless he regarded it as beneath his dignity to take any notice of the charge.

The king, who was at dinner when the arrival of Dandelot was announced, received him graciously, and began the interview by assuring him that he should never forget the signal services which Dandelot had rendered; then gradually approaching the question of the rumors current in regard to him, he told him that he was accused, not only of disbelieving, but even of uttering aloud his disbelief in the holy mysteries of our religion; at last,

giving complete and clear expression to his thought, the king said, —

“Dandelot, I command you, on your allegiance, to state here your belief in regard to the blessed sacrifice of the Mass.”

Dandelot was well aware beforehand of the grief he should suffer in conversing with the king on any such subject; and as he both deeply respected him and loved him as a friend, he said humbly, —

“Sire, will not your Majesty graciously spare a subject as devotedly loyal to you as I from answering a question of mere belief, in regard to which you, great and powerful as you are, have no other means of considering than the meanest of your subjects?”

But the king had gone too far to draw back; he ordered Dandelot to answer categorically. Then, seeing that he could not possibly avoid the question, Dandelot replied, —

“Sire, filled as I am with sentiments of the liveliest gratitude for all the kindness which it has pleased your Majesty to bestow upon me, I am ready to risk my life and sacrifice my fortune in your service; but since you compel me to make the confession, in matters of religion I recognize no master but God, and my conscience will not allow me to disguise my belief. Wherefore, Sire, I do not fear to proclaim that the Mass was not only not enjoined by our Lord, but is even an abominable invention of men.”

At this horrible blasphemy, which the most rigid Huguenots regarded as a truth which it was wise not to proclaim from the housetops, the king fairly quivered with astonishment; then, passing from astonishment to anger, he cried, —

“Dandelot, up to this moment I have defended you against your accusers; but after such abominable heresy

I command you to leave my presence. And I declare to you that if you were not in some measure my ward, I would run you through the body."

Dandelot remained perfectly calm, bowed reverently, and without making any reply to the terrible rebuke which he had just received from the king, withdrew.

But Henri did not preserve the same calmness; scarcely had the tapestry which hung at the door of the dining-room fallen after Dandelot when he directed the master of the royal wardrobe, La Bordaisière, immediately to arrest the accused and to take him as a prisoner to Meaux. The order was executed; but the Cardinal de Lorraine was not yet satisfied: he demanded that Dandelot should be deprived of the command of the French infantry, and that it should be given to Blaise de Montluc, who was entirely devoted to the house of Guise, having been page of René II., Duke of Lorraine. Such was the reward which Dandelot received for the great services that he had rendered the king, and which the king had promised never to forget! We know how his brother, Admiral Coligny, was rewarded later. Our readers now know why the name of Dandelot was not heard among those which were covered with glory every moment by the light of some fresh victory.

In the mean time Emmanuel Philibert had by no means remained inactive, but had vigorously struggled against this supreme effort of France. The battle of Gravelines, won by Count Lamoral d'Egmont over Maréchal de Termes, was fought on one of the days which France counts as black-letter days. Then, as sometimes happens in single combats, when two foemen worthy of each other's steel, after having fought with varying success, will, each feeling the same fatigue, step backward and stand resting on the guard of his sword; so France and

Spain, Guise and Emmanuel Philibert, stood and recovered breath,—the Duke of Guise at Thionville, and Emmanuel Philibert at Brussels.

Meanwhile King Philip of Spain commanded in person the army in the Low Countries, thirty thousand strong, together with forty thousand horse, encamped on the river Anthée. While there, the king was informed of the death of the Queen of England, his wife, who succumbed to an attack of dropsy, while insisting that she was pregnant.

The principal army of France—to return to matters nearer home—lay intrenched behind the Somme, and, like the Spanish army and its leaders, for the moment was inactive. It consisted, besides seventeen thousand French troops, of eighteen thousand *reiters*, twenty-six thousand German foot-soldiers, and six thousand Swiss; when in battle array, it occupied, according to Montluc, a league and a half of ground, and three hours were necessary to make a circuit around it.

Lastly, Charles V., as we said in the first part of this work, died on the 21st of September, 1558, at the convent of St. Just, in the arms of the Archbishop of Toledo, about the same time that the young queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart, but fifteen years of age, was married to the Dauphin François, who was only seventeen. Such are the vicissitudes of our earthly life.

This is how the public and private affairs of France, of Spain, and of England, and consequently of the whole world, stood when, on a morning of the month of October, 1558, Emmanuel,—who, clothed with that grief of which Hamlet speaks when he said, “For I have that within which passeth show,” was giving some orders of a military nature to Scianca-Ferro, whose wound was now entirely healed, and who was making preparations for a

journey to the king, who was with the army, — raising his eyes, saw Leona enter his cabinet. She was, as usual, beautiful and smiling, but she could not conceal a tinge of melancholy behind her smile.

In the terrible campaign in France of the preceding year we have lost sight of the beautiful girl, because Emmanuel Philibert, in order that she should not be exposed to the danger and fatigue incident to camps, battles, and sieges, had insisted upon her remaining at Cambrai. Then, when the campaign was ended, with greater happiness and deeper love than ever, the lovers resumed their daily intercourse; and as, whether from weariness or disappointment, Emmanuel seemed to take little interest in the campaign of 1558, whose operations he directed from Brussels, the pair were no longer separated.

Accustomed to read on Leona's face her most secret thoughts, Emmanuel Philibert was struck with this tinge of melancholy, which soon took the place of the smile, almost forced, on the girl's countenance. As for Scianca-Ferro, less skilled than his friend in divining the secrets of the heart, he saw in the entrance of Leona only her daily visit to the prince's cabinet; and after shaking the hand of the handsome page — whose true sex he had long known — in a manner half reverential, half friendly, he took from Emmanuel the despatch, and withdrew, carelessly humming a Picard song, and loudly jingling his spurs. Emmanuel Philibert followed him with his eyes to the door, and then glanced uneasily at Leona, who, still smiling, remained standing, leaning against a chair, as if, without support, her failing limbs refused to bear her. Her cheeks were pale, and her eyes glistened, still wet with tears.

"What is the matter, then, with my love this morning?" asked Emmanuel, in that tone of almost paternal tenderness which characterizes the passage, in men, from

youth to mature manhood; for on July 8, 1558, the Duke of Savoy attained his thirtieth year. In consequence of the misfortune which had compelled him to become a great man — while in all probability, if he had quietly inherited the dukedom from his father and had been allowed to reign unmolested, he would have never shown his true qualities — Emmanuel Philibert at the early age of thirty had acquired a military reputation which vied with that of the first soldiers of the period; namely, the Constable of France, the Duc de Guise, the Admiral of France, and old Maréchal de Strozzi, who had just fallen so gloriously at the siege of Thionville.

“I have,” said Leona, in her sweet, low voice, “at the same time to remind you of a promise and to ask a favor.”

“Leona knows that if my memory should fail me, my heart is true. Let us see first what you wish to remind us of, and then we can consider the request.”

And while he rang, to order the usher to allow no one to enter, he motioned to Leona to seat herself on a pile of cushions near him, which was the customary seat of the girl in her interviews with her lover.

Leona took her usual seat, and leaning her elbows on Emmanuel's knees, and her head on her own hands, gazed into the eyes of the duke with an infinite sweetness, in which might be read love and unbounded devotion.

“Well?” asked the duke, with a smile which betrayed his anxiety, as Leona's smile betrayed melancholy.

“What day of the month is to-day, Emmanuel?” asked Leona.

“The 17th of November, unless I am mistaken,” replied the duke.

“Does this date recall to my beloved no anniversary worthy of celebration?”

Emmanuel smiled more freely than at first; for his memory, better than he had pretended, had just carried him backward, and recalled to him in all its details the event to which Leona referred.

"It is twenty-four years ago to-day," said he, "that, nearly at this very hour, borne by my horse, who had fled at the sight of a mad bull, I found, a short distance from the village of Oleggio, on the banks of a brook which flows into the Tessina, a woman who was quite dead, and a child nearly so. This child, which I was fortunate enough to bring back to life, was my beloved Leona."

"Have you since that day, Emmanuel, ever had reason to regret that occurrence?"

"On the contrary, I have blessed Heaven every time that I have remembered it," said the prince; "for that child has become the guardian angel of my happiness."

"And if on this solemn day, for the first time in my life, I were to ask you to make me a promise, Emmanuel, would you find me too exacting, and refuse my prayer?"

"You fill me with anxiety, Leona," said Emmanuel. "What request could you possibly make me which you would not be assured I should grant the same instant?"

Leona grew pale; and with a trembling voice, and as if listening to a distant sound, she said, —

"By the glory of your name, Emmanuel, by your family motto, 'God remains to him whom all else fails,' by the solemn promises made to your dying father, swear to grant me, Emmanuel, what I am about to ask."

The Duke of Savoy shook his head like a man who feels that he is engaging himself to make some unknown great sacrifice, but who at the same time is convinced that this sacrifice will be made to the advantage of his honor and his fortune; then, solemnly raising his hand, he said, —

"Everything which you may ask of me, except to forego seeing you again, I will accord you."

"Oh," murmured Leona, "I did not believe you would swear without reservation. Thanks, Emmanuel! Now, what I ask, even exact, in virtue of the oath you have just taken, is that you raise no objection to the peace between France and Spain, of which my brother comes, in the name of King Philip and King Henri, to submit the terms."

"Peace! Your brother! How do you chance to know that of which I am ignorant?"

"A powerful prince believed that he needed your humble servant near him, Emmanuel; and now you perceive how it happens that I know what you have not been informed of yet, but what you will know immediately."

Just then a sound of horses' hoofs was heard in the square in front of the city hall, immediately under the cabinet of the prince; thereupon Leona arose and went to give orders, in the name of the Duke of Savoy, to the usher to introduce the chief of the cavalcade. A moment afterward, while Emmanuel Philibert held Leona by the arm, who wished to withdraw, the usher announced, —

"His Excellency Count Odoardo Maraviglia, ambassador of their Majesties the Kings of Spain and France!"

"Admit him," said Emmanuel Philibert, in a voice which trembled almost as much as Leona's had a moment before.

CHAPTER II.

THE AMBASSADOR OF THEIR MAJESTIES THE KINGS OF
FRANCE AND SPAIN.

IN the person bearing the name just pronounced our readers have recognized the brother of Leona, — the young man condemned to death for attempting to kill the murderer of his father, as well as the nobleman recommended to his son Philip by Charles V. on the day of his abdication. Our readers will moreover remember that although in Odoardo Maraviglia Leona recognized her brother, he is far from suspecting that Leona, of whom he just caught a glimpse in the tent of Emmanuel Philibert in the camp at Hesdin, is his sister. The Duke of Savoy, then, alone, with his page, knows the secret which saved Odoardo's life.

Now, how is it that Odoardo is at once the mandatory of Philip and of Henri? Let us explain in as few words as possible. Son of an ambassador of King François I., brought up among the royal pages, enjoying the intimacy of the dauphin Henri II., and publicly adopted by the Emperor Charles V. on the day of his abdication, Odoardo was regarded with equal favor at the courts of Philip II. and of Henri II. We know moreover, without being acquainted with all the details of the event, that it was to Emmanuel Philibert that he owed his life. It is easily conceivable, then, that a person interested in bringing about peace should endeavor to make use for that purpose of the man who had at the same time the

ear of both Philip and Henri ; and that when the principal articles of that peace were arranged between those sovereigns, the same man should be sent to Emmanuel Philibert to induce him to agree to them, especially, as we have said, since, according to the report which was spread, it was to the intercession of the Duke of Savoy not only that Odoardo Maraviglia's life had been saved, but also that he had been loaded with honors, and commended to King Philip by the emperor. The person, then, who conceived the idea of employing Odoardo Maraviglia was not mistaken in a single point. The preliminaries of peace, equally desired by Philip II. and Henri de Valois, were more promptly arranged than might have been expected in an affair of such importance ; and, as might also have been anticipated, although the grounds of the regard which Emmanuel Philibert had for the son of King François I.'s ambassador were not known, yet he was one of the most charming envoys that could possibly have been made use of.

Emmanuel rose, then, and notwithstanding his knowledge that a private sorrow lay hidden for him in this great political event, held out his hand, which the ambassador reverently kissed.

"Monseigneur," said he, "you see in me a very fortunate man, for I hope to show your Highness in the future, what I trust I have done in the past, that you saved the life of a grateful man."

"It was to the generosity of the noble emperor for whom we all are wearing mourning that you first owe your life, my dear Odoardo ; I was only the intermediary for his clemency."

"Agreed, my lord ; but you were, for me, the visible bearer of the celestial grace ; therefore it is you whom I adore, as the ancient patriarchs worshipped the angels

who enlightened them as to the divine will. My lord, I come bearing the will of the kings of Spain and of France, — I am an ambassador of peace."

"It is in that character that you were announced, Odoardo; I expected you in that character, and I receive you in that character."

"I was announced to you — you expected me? Pardon me, my lord; but I believed that I should be the first to announce my arrival by my arrival itself; and as to the proposals which I was charged to convey to you, they have been kept so secret —"

"Do not be uneasy, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur," replied the Duke of Savoy, trying to smile. "Have you never heard tell of certain men who have, like Socrates, their familiar demon, who informs them beforehand of the most secret things? I am one of those men."

"Then," said Odoardo, "you know the cause of my visit?"

"Yes, but the cause only; you will have to inform me as to the details." Whereupon Odoardo, bowing, made a sign to Emmanuel indicating that they were not alone.

Leona saw it, and made a step, as though intending to withdraw; but the prince, laying his hand on her arm, detained her. "I am always alone when I am with this young man, Odoardo," said he; "for he is the familiar demon of whom I spoke just now. Remain, Leone, remain," added the duke. "*We* must know all the propositions which are to be made to me. I am listening, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur."

"What would you say, Monseigneur," asked Odoardo, smiling, "if I should tell your Highness that in exchange for Ham, Le Catelet, and St. Quentin, France gives you a hundred and ninety-eight towns?"

"I should say," replied Emmanuel, "that it is impossible."

"It is, however, so, my lord."

"And among the towns which France surrenders, is Calais included?"

"No. The new queen of England, Elizabeth, who on the ground of conscientious scruples has just refused to marry King Philip II., husband of her late sister Mary, has been thrown over. However, France retains Calais and the other towns in Picardy retaken by Monsieur de Guise from the English, only on certain conditions."

"And what are they?"

"At the end of eight years the King of France will be obliged to restore them, unless he pays fifty thousand crowns to England."

"He will pay them, unless he should be as poor as Baudouin, who pledged the crown of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Yes; but it is a sort of atonement that the king wanted to make Queen Elizabeth, and with which fortunately she is quite content, having enough to do at present with the pope."

"Has she not been declared illegitimate?" asked Emmanuel.

"Yes; but he will in consequence lose his suzerainty over England. Elizabeth has just declared that all the acts passed in the reign of her late sister in favor of the Catholic religion are repealed; that all the acts passed in the reign of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. against the pope will be re-enacted, and, like those kings, she will assume the title of head of the English church."

"And what is France going to do about the little queen of Scotland in all this clashing of interests?"

"Henri II. has declared Mary Stuart queen of Scotland

and England, as heir of the late queen Mary Tudor and sole daughter of James V., grandson of Henry VII. of England, and in virtue of the illegitimacy of Elizabeth, who was bastardized by an act which has never been repealed."

"Yes," said Emmanuel Philibert; "nevertheless, there is a will of Henry VIII. which declares Elizabeth heir to the throne on the demise without lawful issue of Edward and Mary, and Parliament in proclaiming Elizabeth queen has relied upon that. But have the kindness, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, to return to our proper business."

"Certainly, my lord. Well, here are the principal conditions of the treaty, the basis on which we propose to re-establish peace:—

"The King of Spain and the King of France will conjointly endeavor to restore peace to the Church by promoting the assembling of an œcumenical council.

"There will be an amnesty for all adherents of either party; with the exception, however, of exiles from Naples, Sicily, and Milan, who will not be included in the amnesty.

"It is then stipulated that all the towns and castles captured by France from Spain, and especially Thionville, Marienburg, Ivoy, Montmédy, Damvilliers, Hesdin, the county of Charlais, and Valence in Lomenie, shall be restored to the King of Spain; that Ivoy shall be dismantled, on account of the destruction of Théroanne; that King Philip shall marry Princess Élisabeth of France, who was first intended for his son Don Carlos, and that she shall have as dowry eighty thousand gold crowns; that the fortress of Bouillon shall be restored to the Bishop of Liège; that the Infanta of Portugal shall receive the estates descending to her from Queen Eleanor, her mother, widow of François I.; lastly, that the two kings shall restore to the Duke of Mantua what was cap-

tured in Montferrat, and that the citadels built there are not to be demolished."

"And are all these conditions agreed to by the King of France?" asked Emmanuel.

"All. What do you think of it?"

"I say that it is perfectly wonderful, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, and that if you have had enough influence to bring it all about, the Emperor Charles V. acted with great wisdom in commending you, on his abdication, to his son the King of Spain."

"Alas! no, my lord," replied Odoardo; "the two principal agents in bringing about this singular peace are Madame de Valentinois, who is troubled about the sudden rise of the house of Guise and the influence of Queen Catherine, and the Constable of France, who feels that during his captivity the Lorrainers have done all in their power to injure him."

"Ah!" said Emmanuel, "now I understand why the constable has asked King Philip so many times for leave of absence in order to visit France, and can thus also account for the request that he has addressed to me to ransom him and the admiral for two hundred crowns, — a request which I have just submitted to the king through the medium of my squire, Scianca-Ferro, who left a moment before your arrival."

"The king will grant this request, or else he is very ungrateful," returned the ambassador. Then, after a moment's silence, and keenly regarding the prince, he said, "But you, my lord, you do not ask what is to be done on your own account."

Emmanuel felt Leona's hand, which he had not released during this conversation, tremble within his own. "For me?" he replied. "My dear Odoardo, I hoped that I should be forgotten."

"In that event King Philip and King Henri would have had to seek another envoy than him who owes his life to you, my lord. No, no! God be thanked, Providence has this time been just, and the victor at St. Quentin will be, I hope, generously requited."

Emmanuel exchanged a sad glance with the page, and waited.

"My lord," said Odoardo, "all the towns which have been taken from the duke your father and you north and south of the Alps will be restored to you, with the exception of Turin, Pignerol, Chieri, Chivas, and Villa Nuova, of which France is to remain in possession until your Highness shall have a male heir. Moreover, until the birth of this heir, which will put an end to the claim of Louise of Savoy and Piedmont, the King of Spain will have the right to keep garrisons in the towns of Asti and Vercelli."

"Then," said Emmanuel Philibert, passionately, "in the event of my not marrying—"

"You will lose five towns, my lord, so splendid that they would be worthy of a princely crown!"

"But," said Leona, also greatly moved, "Monseigneur le Duc de Savoie will marry. Will your Excellency have the goodness, then, to bring this matter to an end by informing the prince what illustrious alliance is intended for him?"

Odoardo gazed at the page in astonishment; then he turned toward the duke, whose countenance expressed the most cruel anxiety. The ambassador, clever as he was, was mistaken as to its cause.

"Oh, put your mind at rest, my lord!" said he; "the lady intended for you is worthy a king." And as the pale lips of Emmanuel remained closed, instead of parting to ask the question for which Odoardo waited, "It is," he

added, "Madame Marguerite de France, sister of King Henri II. ; and in addition to the entire duchy of Savoy, she will bring as dowry to her fortunate husband three hundred thousand gold crowns."

"Madame Marguerite de France," murmured Emmanuel, "is a noble princess, I know ; but I have always said, Monsieur, that I would gain back my duchy by my victories, not by a marriage."

"But," said Odoardo, "Madame Marguerite de France is worthy, my lord, of being the reward of your victories ; and very few princes have received to wife a king's sister and a king's daughter as a recompense for gaining a battle and capturing a town."

"Oh," murmured Emmanuel, "why did I not break my sword at the beginning of this campaign ?" Then, as Odoardo gave him such a look of astonishment, —

"Would your Excellency," said Leona, "leave me alone for a moment with the prince ?"

Odoardo remained silent, and continued to gaze inquiringly at Emmanuel Philibert.

"A quarter of an hour," added Leona ; "and in a quarter of an hour your Excellency shall receive from the prince the answer that you desire."

The duke shook his head, — a motion which Leona checked immediately by a silent but supplicating gesture. Odoardo bowed and withdrew ; he saw at once that the mysterious page alone was able to overcome the incomprehensible resistance which the duke seemed to oppose to the wishes of the kings of France and Spain.

A quarter of an hour later, summoned by the usher, Odoardo Maraviglia re-entered the cabinet of the Duke of Savoy. Emmanuel Philibert was alone. Sad, but resigned, he held out his hand to the envoy.

“Odoardo,” said he, “you may return to those who have sent you, and tell them that Emmanuel Philibert accepts with gratitude the portion which the kings of France and Spain are pleased to accord the Duke of Savoy.”

CHAPTER III.

IN THE QUEEN'S APARTMENTS.

THANKS to the skill of the envoy, gifted with all the diplomatic skill inborn in Florentines and Milanese; thanks especially to the interest which the two kings had that the secret should be religiously kept, — nothing, with the exception of those vague rumors which ever accompany great events, transpired in the court in regard to the great designs which Odoardo Maraviglia had just laid before the Duke of Savoy, and whose realization was to cost France so dear. It was with profound astonishment, then, that two horsemen, followed each by a squire, arriving from opposite directions, met at the gates of the Louvre, four days after the interview which we have just related, and recognized each other, — the one as the Constable de Montmorency, who was believed to be a prisoner at Antwerp; and the other as the Duc de Guise, who was believed to be with the camp at Compiègne.

Between these two deadly enemies few words were wasted. In his quality of imperial prince the Duc de Guise had the right of precedence over all the nobility of France; Monsieur de Montmorency therefore reined in his horse, while Monsieur de Guise went forward, so that it might have been thought that the constable was merely the squire of some nobleman belonging to the suite of the prince, if, on entering the courtyard of the Louvre, — where the king had taken up his winter residence, — the one had not gone to the right, and the other to the left.

The Duc de Guise thereupon repaired to the apartments of Queen Catherine; the constable to those of the royal favorite, Diane de Poitiers. Both constable and duke were looked for with equal impatience. Let us then follow the person of greatest consequence to the apartments of the lady possessed of the greatest influence, — in appearance, at least; namely, the Duc de Guise, who paid the queen a visit.

Catherine de' Medici was a Florentine, and the Guises were Lorraines; there was, then, nothing surprising that when the news of the fatal battle of St. Quentin was circulated throughout France, Catherine and the Cardinal de Lorraine, who saw their influence lessened by that which the constable naturally exercised as commander-in-chief of the army, had but one idea, — not regret that the loss of this battle brought France within an ace of utter ruin, but rejoicing that by the capture of the constable and of one of his sons by the Spaniards on that terrible day, the influence of the house of Montmorency was brought to naught. Now, the influence of the Montmorencies could not but wane as that of the Guises increased, by the natural swing of the political and military pendulum. Thus, as we have already said, the whole civil administration of the kingdom had been intrusted to the Cardinal de Lorraine; while François de Guise, expected from Italy as a savior, on his arrival assumed charge of all military affairs, with the title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom.

We have seen, moreover, what use the duke made of his power: the army reorganized; Calais restored to France; Guines, Ham, and Thionville carried by assault, — such was the result of a single campaign.

The Duc de Guise, then, indulged in a dream of all-embracing ambition, which was soon to be realized, —

that is to say, one of the pleasantest dreams that a Guise could possibly indulge in, when a vague rumor rudely awoke him. It was commonly reported that the constable was about to return to Paris, — a return which, if true, might fairly be regarded as the preliminary to a treaty of peace. At the mere rumor of this the Duc de Guise quitted the camp at Compiègne, and when he had got half-way to Paris, — at Louvres, — he met a messenger whom the cardinal had despatched, enjoining him to repair to Paris without delay. The messenger had no further instructions; but forewarned as he was, the duke had very little doubt why the messenger had been sent. When the duke met Monsieur de Montmorency at the gate of the Louvre, whatever doubt remained was instantly removed: the constable was free, and in all probability peace would be the immediate result of his unexpected liberty.

Monsieur de Guise had regarded the imprisonment of the constable as an eternal captivity, like that of King John: his disappointment was cruel. Monsieur de Montmorency had lost everything, while Monsieur de Guise had saved all; nevertheless, the conquered general was about to appear at court on the same footing as the victorious one. And who knew yet if, thanks to the protection of Madame de Valentinois, the former would not get the better of the latter?

Conjectures like these darkened the brow of the Duc de Guise as he ascended the stairway leading to the apartments of the queen, while, on the contrary, with joyous countenance the constable hurried, at the other side of the courtyard, to those of Madame Diane.

The duke was evidently expected, for as soon as his name was announced he saw the portière of the queen's apartment rise, and heard the voice of Catherine, who with her harsh Florentine accent said, —

"Come in, Monsieur le Duc ; come in !"

The queen was alone. The duke looked around inquiringly, as though he expected to find a third person in the room.

"Ah, yes," said the queen ; "you seek your brother, doubtless."

"Is your Majesty aware," replied the duke, dispensing as much as possible with all forms of etiquette, as was becoming in the critical situation in which they then were, "that my brother sent a messenger express, asking my instant return to Paris ?"

"Yes," said Catherine ; "but as the courier only left at one in the afternoon, we did not expect you until evening, — really not until far into the night."

"Ah ! but the messenger met me half-way on the road."

"And what induced you to return to Paris ?"

"My anxiety."

"Duke," said Catherine, forgetting for once to make use of her natural cunning, "your anxiety is justified ; there was never greater reason for it."

At this moment the sound of a key was heard, first in one lock, then in a second ; a secret door opened, which led to the queen's corridors, and the cardinal appeared. Without taking time even to salute his brother, and as if he were in the apartment of a lady of his own or even of inferior rank, he went straight up to Catherine and François, and in a tone of voice which showed the degree of importance he attached to the tidings he was about to announce, he said, —

"Do you know who has just arrived ? Have you heard ?"

"Yes," replied the duke, who at once knew to whom the cardinal referred ; "I met him at the gate of the Louvre."

"To whom do you refer?" asked Catherine.

"The constable," replied at the same time the Duc and the Cardinal de Guise.

"Ah!" said Catherine, as if she had received a stab in the breast. "But perhaps, as hitherto, he comes back on leave of absence for a few days only."

"No," returned the cardinal. "He has returned for good; he has had his ransom and that of the admiral, thanks to the Duke of Savoy, put at two hundred thousand crowns,—a sum which he will find means of inducing the king to pay. By the cross of Lorraine," continued the cardinal, biting his mustache in his rage, "his folly was, in truth, too great for any mere noble to pay it as it deserved; and if it had been properly estimated, the Montmorencys, the Danvilles, the Colignys, and the Dandelots would have been ruined by its punishment."

"In short," asked Catherine, "what have you learned in addition to what we already know?"

"Not a great deal; but I am expecting every minute your former messenger, Monsieur le Duc de Nemours," said Charles de Lorraine, turning toward his brother. "Monsieur de Nemours is attached to the house of Savoy; it is not suspected that he acts in our interest, and as the wind just now blows from the direction of Piedmont, he will perhaps be able to give us some information."

At this moment a low knock was heard at the door by which, a short time before, the cardinal had entered, and which he had locked behind him.

"Ah!" said Charles de Lorraine, "that will most likely be he."

"Then let him in," said Catherine; and without troubling herself as to what might be thought at the key of her room being seen in the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine, she pushed him toward the door.

It was indeed the same Duc de Nemours whom we saw introduced into the apartment of Catherine by the cardinal a year and a half before, on the morning when the king and a part of the court went hunting in the forest of St. Germain. The duke was not troubled by anxiety like the Duc de Guise; at the same time he was not on such familiar terms with the queen as the cardinal, so that he was about to salute the queen according to the laws of the most rigid etiquette; but the latter did not give him time.

"Monsieur le Duc," said she, "our dear cardinal tells us that you have in all likelihood news for us. Speak! What do you know in regard to this wretched peace?"

"Why, I can give you the very latest news, and at first hand. I have this moment seen the envoy, Odoardo Maraviglia, who himself has just left Duke Emmanuel of Savoy."

"Then you must be well informed," said the Cardinal de Lorraine, "for the Duke of Savoy is the person most interested in this business, as his principality is at stake."

"Well," said Monsieur de Nemours, "the most astonishing thing is that Emmanuel Philibert has received the royal proposals sadly rather than with pleasure. Whether this is due to indifference to state honors, or — and this is the more probable — to some mysterious cause such as secret love, or engagements made with another lady, we can only conjecture."

"Perhaps," said the Duc de Guise, bitterly, "the royal gratitude has ill-requited him. There would be nothing strange in that: he too is a conqueror."

"In that case," said the Duc de Nemours, "he must be hard to please, for his territories are restored to him intact, with the exception of five towns, and even these

are to be given up as soon as his wife shall present him with an heir."

"His wife! Who is she?" eagerly asked the Cardinal de Lorraine.

"Ah! true," replied Nemours, "I have not yet told you who she is. Madame Marguerite de France is the lady intended for that honor."

"The king's sister!" cried Catherine.

"She has succeeded in her aim," said François de Guise; "she determined to marry none but a sovereign prince."

"Only," said Catherine, with that acridity peculiar to ladies when they speak of one another, — "only she will have waited some time, dear creature; for unless I am deceived, she is at least thirty-six. Nevertheless, she won't have lost by waiting. And how did Emmanuel Philibert take the announcement of this royal alliance?"

"At first very coldly. Count Maraviglia declares that for a moment the duke was determined to refuse outright; then, after a quarter of an hour's reflection, he agreed to it, — though later in the evening he told Maraviglia that he did not wish the engagement to be regarded as positively settled until he had seen the Princess Marguerite. But you understand, of course, that the envoy has let slip no suspicion of this hesitation, but represented him to King Henri as the happiest and most grateful prince in the world."

"And what," asked François de Guise, "are the provinces which are to be restored to him?"

"All," replied the young man, "with the exception of the towns of Turin, Pignerol, Chieri, Chivas, and Villa Nuova d'Asti, which will be given up as soon as his first male heir shall be born. Besides, it would have been absurd for the King of France to haggle about towns or castles, since he is giving up, as well to the Queen of

England as to the King of Spain, somewhere about a hundred and ninety-eight."

"Good!" said the Duc de Guise, turning pale, in spite of himself; "and haven't you heard that Calais is among these surrendered towns and castles? It is only what one might expect."

"I should hardly think so," said the Duc de Nemours.

"*Mordieu!*" said the Duc de Guise, "it would be as much as to say that my sword is of no value to him. If that is so, I will offer it to some sovereign who will know how to make use of it, — if, instead," he added between his teeth, "I don't keep it for myself."

At this moment one of the cardinal's valets, set on the watch by his eminence, hastily raised the tapestry, crying, —

"The king!"

"Where is he?" asked Catherine.

"At the end of the long gallery," replied the valet.

Catherine anxiously regarded François de Guise, as if to question him as to what he thought he ought to do.

"I shall await him," said the duke.

"Remain, my lord," said Nemours; "you, a taker of towns and gainer of battles, may boldly await all the kings in the world. But do you not imagine that when his Majesty finds the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise here, he will think there are enough without me?"

"Certainly," said Catherine; "there is no necessity for him to find you here — The key, my dear cardinal."

The cardinal, who had the key at hand so that if anything unexpected should occur he would be ready, handed it hastily to the queen. The door opened to the Duc de Nemours, and it had just discreetly closed behind him, when, frowning and with an angry look on his face, Henri de Valois appeared in the doorway opposite.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE APARTMENTS OF THE FAVORITE.

IF we followed the Duc de Guise first, instead of the constable, it is not because what happened in the apartments of Madame de Valentinois was of less interest than what we have just seen occur in those of Catherine de' Medici; but because, as we said at the beginning of our last chapter, the Duc de Guise took higher rank among French nobles than Monsieur de Montmorency, and Catherine was a greater lady than the Duchesse de Valentinois. Honor to whom honor is due! But now that we have paid due deference to the royal and ducal supremacy, let us see what was happening in the apartments of the beautiful Diane de Poitiers, and find out how it was that Henri made his appearance in his wife's room frowning and looking so angry.

The arrival of the constable was no more a mystery to the Duchesse de Valentinois than the return of the Duc de Guise was a secret to Catherine de' Medici; the one safe under the king's protection, the other sheltered by her royal position, each played her game. Catherine exclaimed, "Guise!" and the Duchesse de Valentinois, "Montmorency!"

As undoubtedly there was no lack of gossip in regard to the queen and the cardinal, so evil tongues were kept busy—as we think we have said before—about the favorite and the constable. Now, how could an old man of sixty-eight, coarse, cross, and peevish, be the rival of

a king of forty, gallant and charming? This, however, is one of those mysteries whose explanation we leave to those clever anatomists who claim that no single fibre of the heart escapes their scalpel. What was real, incontestable, visible to all eyes, was the almost passive obedience of the beautiful Diane — this favorite who was more queen than the queen — not only to the wishes, but even the caprices, of the constable. This state of things lasted, indeed, for twenty years, — from the time when Diane was only thirty, and the constable forty-eight.

It was therefore with a cry of joy that the duchess received the announcement: "Monseigneur le Connétable de Montmorency."

She was not, however, alone; in a corner of the room, lolling against a pile of cushions, two beautiful children were tasting the sweets of life, into which they had just entered by the portal of love; these were the young queen Mary Stuart and the dauphin François, married only six months, and perhaps more deeply in love than on the day before their wedding. The young queen was putting on her husband's head a velvet cap which was a little too large for her, and which she insisted was not too small for him. They were so deeply engaged in this grave occupation that however important from a political point of view, the announcement of the constable's return to Paris was, they did not hear it, or if they heard it, did not pay the least attention to it.

How beautiful at fifteen and seventeen is love, when a year of the divine passion is worth twenty years of life? François II. died at the age of nineteen, after two years of happiness with the young and beautiful Mary; but was he not happier than she, who lived thirty years longer than he, but passed three of those years in flight, and eighteen in prison?

The beautiful Diane, therefore, without troubling herself about the charming couple who lived their happy life in the corner of the room, went up to the constable with open arms, presenting her fair face to be kissed. But he, more cautious than she, suddenly stopped, as he was about to touch it with his lips.

"Stay," said he; "it would seem that you are not alone, my fair Duchess!"

"That is true, my dear Constable," she replied.

"Very well, then, old as I may be, my eyes are yet good enough to see something moving down there."

Diane burst out laughing. "What you see moving there," said she, "is the Queen of Scotland and of England, and the heir apparent of the Crown of France. But don't put yourself out; they are so deeply interested in their own affairs that they won't care about interfering in ours."

"Well," said the constable, "affairs over the water are in a condition to give full occupation to those young heads."

"My dear Constable, the Scots might be in London, or the English in Edinburgh, — which in either case would be wonderful enough, — and the news should be cried as loudly as the announcement of your arrival was just now, and I question whether either of these children would even turn round. Oh, no! they are busied with matters a great deal more important, — they love, my dear Constable. What is the kingdom of England or of Scotland in comparison with the word 'love,' which gives the kingdom of heaven to those who pronounce it between two kisses?"

"Oh, siren that you are!" murmured the old constable. "But let us see, how are our affairs getting along?"

"Why," said Diane, "it seems to me that they are going marvellously well, since you are here. Peace is declared, or nearly so, and Monsieur François de Guise

will be compelled to return his sword to its scabbard. Now, a lieutenant-general of the kingdom is not always essential, but there must always be a constable; therefore my dear constable will reappear on the scene, and find himself first in the kingdom, instead of second."

"Well, by Heaven, that is well put," said the constable; "but the matter of ransom still remains. You know, my beautiful Diane, that I am here on parole, and that I owe two hundred thousand gold crowns."

"Well?" asked the duchess, with a smile.

"Well, a thousand devils! I don't see how on earth I am going to pay it."

"For whom were you fighting, my dear Constable, when you were taken?"

"*Pardieu!* it was for the king, it seems to me; though the wound which I received was entirely my own."

"Very well, then; the king will of course pay the ransom. But I thought I heard you say, my dear Constable, that if I successfully managed the peace negotiations, Duke Emmanuel, who is a generous prince, would in all likelihood remit the two hundred thousand crowns?"

"Did I say that?" asked the constable.

"You did not say so, but you wrote so."

"The very deuce!" said the constable, laughing; "then you are worth something in the speculation. Well, let us see, this is how the game stands. Yes, Monsieur le Duc de Savoie remits me two hundred thousand crowns; but my nephew the admiral is too proud to accept any such remission, therefore I shall say nothing to him about it."

"Good! so he will pay you his hundred thousand crowns, just as if you had to pay them to Emmanuel Philibert?"

"Exactly."

"So that," continued Diane, "the king will pay you your two hundred thousand crowns under the impression that you have to pay them to Emmanuel Philibert?"

"Exactly."

"Wherefore you will get three hundred thousand crowns,—you who owe no one anything?"

"Certainly, and I owe the pleasure of possessing them to the beautiful Duchesse de Valentinois. But, as all labor deserves its reward, this is what we had better do with these three hundred thousand crowns—"

"First," interrupted the duchess, "we will use two hundred thousand to indemnify the constable for the expenses of the campaign, and the losses and sufferings which eighteen months in prison have caused him."

"Don't you think that too much?"

"Monsieur le Connétable is a lion, and it is only fair that he should receive the lion's share. And the hundred thousand which remain?"

"Well, let us divide them thus: half—fifty thousand—to buy jewelry, etc., for my beautiful duchess; and fifty thousand as dowry for our poor children, who will be very unfortunate if the king does not add something to the wedding-portion which an unhappy father gives his son, which completely exhausts his resources."

"Our daughter Diane of course has her dowry as Duchesse de Castro, which amounts to a hundred thousand crowns. But you understand, my dear Constable, that if the king in his generosity should decide that that is not enough for the wife of a Montmorency and a king's daughter, and loosen his purse-strings to endow her more amply, I should not be the one to draw them tighter, and thus close the purse."

The constable regarded the favorite with great admiration.

"Good!" said he, "the king always wears, then, the magic ring which you have put on his finger?"

"Always," said the duchess, smiling; "and as I think I hear his Majesty's footstep, you will have, I believe, proof of it."

The king, indeed, had a key to Diane's secret door, as the Cardinal de Lorraine had one to Catherine's. There were many secret doors in the Louvre, all of which had at least one key, if not two.

"Nonsense!" said the duchess, regarding her elderly admirer with an indefinable expression of fun, "you are surely not going to be jealous of the king now?"

"I ought to be," grumbled the veteran.

"Ah, take care!" said the duchess, who could not help alluding to the proverbial avarice of the Montmorencys. "It would be jealousy at two hundred per cent loss; and that is not the percentage at which you are accustomed to put —" She was going to say "your love," but she stopped.

"What?" asked the constable.

"Your money," said the duchess.

At this moment the king entered the apartment.

"Oh, Sire!" cried Diane, rushing toward him, "do come, for I was about to send for you. Here is our dear constable, who has just arrived, ever young and proud as the god Mars."

"Yes," said the king, using the mythological language of the day, "and his first visit is to the goddess Venus. He is right. I never say, 'Honor where honor is due,' but, 'None but the brave deserve the fair.' Your hand, dear Constable."

"*Mordieu*, Sire," said Montmorency, grumbling, and beginning to scowl, "I do not know whether I ought to give you my hand."

"Nonsense! and why not?" said the king, laughing.

"Why," replied the constable, scowling more and more, "because it seems to me that you have forgotten me a little here."

"I forget you, my dear Constable?" cried the king, beginning to defend himself, when it would have been so easy to attack.

"Ah, true; Monsieur de Guise has doubtless boasted loudly enough in your ears," said the constable.

"Well," said Henri, who could not help retorting by a back-thrust to this remark of Montmorency, "you could hardly prevent a victor sounding his bugle."

"Sire," said Montmorency, trying to ride the high horse, "there are some defeats as glorious as a victory."

"Yes," said the king, "but less profitable; you must admit that."

"Less profitable, less profitable," grumbled the constable; "undoubtedly. But war is a game in which the cleverest may lose: the king your father knew that."

Henri colored slightly.

"And as to the town of St. Quentin, it seems to me," continued the constable, "that if it surrendered —"

"First," Henri broke in hastily, "let me say, the town of St. Quentin was not surrendered; St. Quentin was taken, — taken after an heroic defence. St. Quentin saved France, which —" The king hesitated.

"Yes, finish your sentence: 'which the battle of St. Lawrence's had ruined.' Is not that what you wish to say? Expose yourself to be wounded, break your heart, and be taken prisoner for a king, so that this king may thank you for it by a compliment!"

"No, my dear Constable," said Henri, who ceased to attack him, in consequence of a look of Diane, "no, I do not say that; on the contrary, I said only that St. Quentin made a noble defence."

"Yes, forsooth ; and how nobly your Majesty has dealt with its defender !"

"Coligny ? What could I do more, my dear Constable, than pay his ransom together with yours ?"

"Let us not speak of that, Sire. It is not a question of Coligny's ransom, but of Dandelot's imprisonment."

"Ah !" said the king, "your pardon, my dear Constable, but Monsieur Dandelot is a heretic."

"As if we were not all of us more or less heretics ! Would you, for instance, claim entrance into paradise, Sire ?"

"Why not ?"

"Ah, then ! You will go like your old Marshal Strozzi, who died a renegade. Just ask your friend Monsieur de Vieilleville what he said with his last breath."

"What did he say ?"

"He said, 'I deny God ; my day is done !' And as Monsieur de Guise said to him, 'Take care, Marshal, for this very day you will stand before Him whom you have just denied,' 'Nonsense !' replied the dying man, snapping his fingers, 'I shall be to-day where all those are who have died in the last six thousand years.' Well, be it so ; why don't you have him disinterred, and his body burned on the Place de Grève ? There would be an additional reason : the old marshal died for you, while the others were not even wounded."

"Constable !" said the king, "you are unjust."

"Unjust ? Bah ! Where, then, is Monsieur Dandelot ? Is he supervising your cavalry, which was his especial duty ; or in his castle, resting after the famous siege of St. Quentin, where you yourself say that he wrought wonders ? No ! he is in prison in the castle of Melun. And why is he there ? Because he gave you his opinion freely in regard to the sacrifice of the Mass. Oh, *mordieu !*

I don't know what prevents me from becoming Huguenot and offering my sword to Monsieur de Condé!"

"Constable!"

"And when I think that, poor Dandelot, it is probably to Monsieur de Guise that you owe your incarceration —"

"Constable," said the king, "I swear to you that Messieurs de Guise have had nothing to do with Dandelot's imprisonment."

"What! you tell me that it is not a scheme of your infernal cardinal?"

"Constable, would you like one thing?" said the king, avoiding the question.

"What?"

"That in honor and as an expression of my pleasure at your happy return, Monsieur Dandelot shall be immediately set at liberty?"

"The deuce!" cried the constable, "I believe I do desire it! I say more, — I will it!"

"Constable, my cousin," the king said, with a smile, demurring, "you know that the king himself says, 'We will!'"

"Very well then, Sire," interrupted Diane; "say, 'We will that our well-beloved Dandelot be set at liberty, that he may be present at the marriage of our beloved daughter Diane de Castro with François de Montmorency, Count of Damville.'"

"Yes," said the constable, grumbling yet more, "if this marriage takes place —"

"And why should it not take place?" asked Diane; "do you think the happy pair too poor to set up house-keeping?"

"Oh! if it is only a question of money," said the king, always delighted to be able to get out of a scrape by pecuniary means, "we shall surely be able to find a hundred thousand crowns in some corner of our treasury."

"It is indeed a question of money," said the constable. "Heavens ! who speaks of money here ? I doubt whether this marriage can take place, though, for another reason."

"And pray what is that ?" asked the king.

"Well, because it will interfere with the plans of your good friends, Messieurs de Guise."

"In truth, my dear Constable, you are fighting with shadows."

"With shadows ! And how then do you account for Monsieur François de Guise's presence in Paris, if it is not to prevent this marriage, which may bring new lustre to the house of Montmorency, — although, with it all," added the constable, insolently, "Madame de Castro is only a bastard."

The king bit his lip, and Diane colored ; but not wishing to reply to this last observation, the king said, —

"First, my dear Constable, you are mistaken ; Monsieur de Guise is not in Paris."

"And where is he, then ?"

"In the camp at Compiègne."

"Nonsense, Sire ! And will you tell me that you have not given him leave of absence ?"

"What to do ?"

"To come here."

"I ? I have given no leave to Monsieur de Guise."

"Very well, then, Sire ; Monsieur de Guise has come to Paris without leave, that is all."

"You are mad, Constable ! Monsieur de Guise knows too well what he owes to me to leave the camp without my permission."

"Sire, you are right, — the duke does owe you much, he is enormously indebted to you ; but he has forgotten what he owes you."

"In short, Constable," said Diane, watching her oppor-

tunity to strike a blow, "are you sure that Monsieur de Guise has committed — I do not know what you call this breach of discipline, this impropriety?"

"Pardon," said the constable, "I have seen him."

"When?" asked the king.

"Just now."

"Where?"

"At the gate of the Louvre; we met each other there."

"How is it that I have not seen him, then?"

"Because instead of turning to the left he turned to the right, and instead of repairing to the king's apartments he visited the queen's."

"You say that Monsieur de Guise is in the queen's apartments?"

"Oh, your Majesty may be sure of that!" said the constable. "I would indeed lay a wager that he is not there alone, and that Monsieur le Cardinal is there also as third person."

"Ah!" cried the king, "we will see about that. Wait for me here, Constable; I ask you to stay but a moment." And the king left the room in anger, while the constable and Diane de Poitiers exchanged a look full of vengeance, and the dauphin François and little Queen Mary, who had seen nothing and heard nothing, a kiss of love.

And now we know how it was that King Henri II. chanced to appear in the queen's apartments angry and frowning.

CHAPTER V.

WHERE, AFTER THE VANQUISHED HAS BEEN TREATED AS VICTOR, THE VICTOR IS TREATED AS THOUGH VANQUISHED.

THE attitude of each of the three persons was different, and exactly expressed their inner feelings. Queen Catherine was still near the private door, leaning against the tapestry ; the hand which held the key, behind her. Her face was pale, and her body quivered ; ambition has strange emotions, which are very like those of love. The cardinal, in his costume as prelate, half ecclesiastic, half military, was standing leaning against a table covered partly with papers and partly with women's frippery, his fist clinched behind him.

Duke François alone stood opposite the door ; he seemed like a champion in the lists, armed and prepared for all comers. In his soldier's attire, — casque and cuirass alone lacking, — with his high boots covered with mud, his long sword, girt around his waist, hanging at his side like a faithful friend, he bore the same aspect which he so well knew how to assume on the battlefield when the enemy came surging around his horse's breastplate, just as in a storm at sea the tumultuous waves break against a rock. Uncovered before the royal majesty, he held in his hand his felt hat, with its cherry-colored plume ; but his tall form, rigid and upright as an oak, did not lose an inch of its height before the king.

Henri came clashing against this victorious stateliness,

which drew the remark from some great lady of the time that before the Duc de Guise the rest of the nobility seemed commoners. He stopped dead, as a pebble which strikes a wall, or as lead against iron.

"Ah, Cousin, is it you?" said he. "I am surprised to find you here. I thought you were in command of the camp at Compiègne."

"That is exactly my own position, Sire," replied the Duc de Guise. "I was exceedingly astonished to meet the constable at the gate of the Louvre; I thought that he was a prisoner at Antwerp."

Henri bit his lip at this severe reply.

"Certainly, Monsieur," said he; "but I paid his ransom, and for two hundred thousand crowns I have had the pleasure of gaining back a faithful friend and an old servant."

"Your Majesty estimates, then, at only two hundred thousand crowns the towns which we are assured you are about to surrender to Spain, England, and Piedmont? As you will surrender nearly two hundred, it would not amount to a thousand crowns per town."

"I surrender these towns, Monsieur, not to ransom Monsieur de Montmorency, but to buy peace."

"I thought up to now—in France, at least—that peace was bought by victories."

"That is because, as a Lorrainer, you do not know the history of France. Have you forgotten, among others, the treaties of Brétigny and of Madrid?"

"No, Sire; but I am unable to see that the situations are identical, or that there is even the least resemblance between them. After the battle of Poitiers King John was a prisoner in London; after the battle of Pavia King François I. was a prisoner in Toledo. At this moment King Henri II. at the head of a splendid army, is all-

powerful — in his palace of the Louvre! What is the advantage, Sire, in recalling, at the height of prosperity, the defeats of periods which were fatal to France?"

"Monsieur de Guise," said the king, haughtily, "have you given proper account of the powers with which I intrusted you when I appointed you lieutenant-general of the kingdom?"

"Yes, Sire! After the disastrous battle of St. Lawrence's, after the heroic defence of St. Quentin, when the enemy was at Noyon, when Monsieur de Nevers had not more than two or three hundred nobles with him, when Paris at the mere rumor of the enemy's advance fled from its broken barriers; when the king, from the highest tower of the castle of Compiègne, anxiously watched the high-road into Picardy, in order to be the last to retreat before the enemy (not as a king, who has no right to expose himself, but as a general, an officer, a soldier who commands a retreating force), — you called me, Sire, and you appointed me lieutenant-general of the kingdom. My duty from that moment was to save France, which Monsieur de Montmorency had imperilled. What have I done, Sire? I brought back the army of Italy to France, I delivered Bourg, I wrested the keys of your kingdom from the girdle of Mary Tudor by recovering Calais from her; I recaptured Guines, Ham, and Thionville; I surprised Arlon, I have repaired the disaster at Gravelines; and after a year of relentless war I have gathered in the camp at Compiègne an army twice as strong as it was when I took command of it. Was that within the scope of my duty, — all that, Sire?"

"Doubtless, doubtless," stammered Henri, much embarrassed.

"Well, then, will your Majesty permit me to say that I do not understand your question: 'Have you given

proper account of the powers with which I intrusted you when I appointed you lieutenant-general of the kingdom?"

"I meant to say, Monsieur le Duc, that in the number of distinct powers with which a king intrusts his subjects, it is not often that the right of remonstrance is included."

"First," replied the Duc de Guise, bowing with a courtesy so manifestly assumed that it was impertinent, "I shall venture to remind your Majesty that I have not the honor of being his subject. After the death of Duke Albert, the Emperor Henry III. gave the duchy of Upper Lorraine to Gérard d'Alsace, first hereditary duke, and a scion of our house. I inherited this duchy from my father, who inherited it from his; and what I have received from my father, by the grace of God I will bequeath to my son. Sire, from the greatest to the least, you do the same in France."

"Do you know, Cousin," Henri replied, thinking to introduce irony into the discussion, "that what you say arouses a fear in my mind?"

"Pray what is that, Sire?" asked the duke.

"Lest France one day should have war with Lorraine."

The duke bit his lip. "Sire," he returned, "it is at least probable; but if that should happen, and that as sovereign duke I had to defend my patrimony against your Majesty, I swear to you that it is only on the breach of my last stronghold that I would sign a treaty as disastrous as that to which you have agreed."

"Monsieur le Duc," said the king, with head erect and in a lofty tone.

"Sire," Monsieur de Guise replied, "let me tell your Majesty what I think, and what all of us who belong to the order of the nobility think. The power of a constable is so great, it is claimed, that when extreme ne-

cessity arises, he may pledge a third of the kingdom. Well, without any other constraint than that of leaving a prison of which he is tired, Monsieur le Connétable costs you more than a third of your kingdom, Sire! Yes, of your kingdom; for I consider as part of it all the conquests in Piedmont which have cost the French crown more than forty millions in gold, and France herself more than a hundred thousand of her sons; for I hold as part of your kingdom those noble parliaments of Turin and of Chambéry which the late king your father established in the French style; for I consider as part of your kingdom all those splendid cities beyond the Alps where so many of your subjects have settled that gradually the inhabitants have forsaken their corrupt Italian and have begun to speak as good French as is spoken at Lyons or at Tours."

"Well," asked Henri, utterly unable to reply to such reasoning, "and for what have I given up all that? For my father's daughter, for my sister Marguerite."

"No, Sire, you have abandoned it on account of Duke Emmanuel Philibert, her husband to be; that is to say, for your deadliest enemy, your most relentless antagonist. Once married, the Princess Marguerite is no longer the daughter of the king your father, the Princess Marguerite is no longer your sister; the Princess Marguerite is Duchess of Savoy. Now shall I tell you what will happen, Sire? The Duke of Savoy will scarcely have returned to his paternal estates when he will root up all that you and your father have planted, and so completely that all the glory which France has gained in Italy during twenty-six or thirty years will be utterly extinguished, and you will lose forever even the hope of one day reconquering the duchy of Milan. And even that does not give me the keenest pain; what does, is the advantage which you give to the lieutenant-general of King Philip, to the rep-

representative of this Spanish house, our deadliest enemy. By the Alps, whose passes the Duke of Piedmont holds, Spain is — think of it, Sire — at the gates of Lyons, — of Lyons, which before this peace was in the very centre of your kingdom, and which to-day is a frontier town !”

“Oh ! your alarm in regard to all this is entirely groundless, Cousin. The Duke of Savoy, in consequence of arrangements made between us, leaves the Spanish service for ours. On the death of the constable his sword is promised to Emmanuel Philibert.”

“It was doubtless with that object in view,” replied the duke, bitterly, “that he took it beforehand at St. Quentin.” Then, as the king made an impatient gesture, he continued : “Pardon, Sire, I am in the wrong, and such questions should be treated seriously. Has Emmanuel Philibert really the reversion of Monsieur de Montmorency ; and is he really to wear the sword branded with the fleur-de-lis ? Well, Sire, on the day when you deliver to him that sword, trust me that he will make the same use of it as the Comte de Saint-Paul did, who was, like the Duke of Savoy, an alien, a descendant of the house of Luxembourg. King Louis XI. and the Duke of Burgundy signed a treaty of peace, as you are going to do, or as you have already done with the King of Spain : one of the conditions of that peace was that the Comte de Saint-Paul should be constable of France, and he was appointed ; but he had scarcely received the sword when he secretly supported the Duke of Burgundy, his former master, and, as you may see from the *Mémoires* of Philippe de Comines, from that moment his whole career was marked by treason.”

“Well,” said the king, “since you send me to the *Mémoires* of Philippe de Comines, I will answer you out of those same *Mémoires*. What was the result of the

treason of the Comte de Saint-Paul? Was he not beheaded? Well, listen, Cousin: on the first evidence of Emmanuel's treason I swear to you — and I, the king, say it — that I will do to him even as my predecessor Louis XI. did to the Comte de Saint-Paul. But, please God, there will be no treason. Duke Emmanuel Philibert, far from forgetting what he owes us, will have ever before his eyes what has been done for him. Moreover, we shall hold, in the very heart of his lands, the marquisate of Saluzzo, as a testimony of the honor due the crown of France, and that the Duke of Savoy, his children and his posterity, shall never forget that the kings of France formerly conquered and held the whole of Piedmont and Savoy, but that for the sake of a daughter of France who married into his house, France has restored, nay, gratuitously given, all that she possessed on both sides the Alps, that they may, by this great liberality, become more devoted to her sovereigns." Then, as the king saw that the duke set very little store on the possession of the marquisate of Saluzzo, which France had reserved, he added: "Moreover, if you would only be pleased to consider the matter a moment, Monsieur le Duc, you would say, with me, that the conduct of the late king my father toward the Duke of Savoy and his father was tyrannical in the highest degree; for he had no right, and it was not the act of a good Christian, thus to drive a son out of his father's duchy and to despoil him of all his possessions; and if I had no other motive than to free my father's soul from this sin, I would restore to Emmanuel Philibert what is rightly his."

The duke bowed.

"Well," said Henri, "you make no reply, Monsieur de Guise?"

"I beg your pardon, Sire. Only, when the passion of

the moment bears your Majesty to the point of accusing your royal father of tyranny, it is no longer to Henri II., it is to King François I. that I, who hold François I. to be a great king and not a tyrant, feel it my duty to give account of my charge. And as you judge your father, Sire, so shall your father judge me ; and as I hold the judgment of the dead less fallible than that of the living, condemned by the living, it is to the dead that I appeal."

Then, drawing near to the splendid portrait of François I. by Titian, which is to-day one of the principal embellishments of the Louvre, but was then the chief ornament of the room in which the dispute we have just related took place, — for no other reason than to demonstrate to our readers that it was not the Spanish sword, but the splendid eyes of a woman which caused the signing of the fatal treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis, — the duke, advancing toward the portrait of the late king, said, —

"O King François I., thou whom Bayard dubbed knight, and who wert called the knightly king, thy subjects desiring to bestow on thee all the noble qualities of thy royal predecessors, in the judgment of the living thou didst regard too highly sieges and battles, and loved too greatly thy splendid kingdom of France, not to regard from where thou art what has passed with us. Thou knowest what I have done and what I would still do ; but I am stayed, O King ! and a peace is preferred which costs more than thirty years of defeat would. My sword as lieutenant-general of the kingdom is then valueless ; and as it shall never be said that such a peace has been agreed to as long as the Duc de Guise wore his sword, I, François de Lorraine, who have never surrendered my sword, give it back to thee, my king, the first for whom I drew it, and who knowest what its value is."

And with these words the duke, unbuckling his sword and its belt, hung them, as a trophy, to the frame of the portrait, bowed, and withdrew, leaving the king furious, the cardinal thunderstruck, and Catherine exultant. The vindictive Florentine, indeed, saw in what had passed but the insult done by the Duc de Guise to Diane de Valentinois, her rival, and to the constable, her enemy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PEDLER.

BETWEEN these two groups of opposing ambitions, which under the pretext of maintaining the dignity of the king or the greatness of France sought the success of their respective houses or the ruin of their rivals, there was a third group, poetic, artistic, and entirely devoted to the beautiful, the good, and the true. This group consisted of the young princess Élisabeth, daughter of Henri II. ; of Diane d'Angoulême, Duchesse de Castro, the widow of Horace Farnese ; of the young couple of whom we caught a glimpse in the apartments of Madame de Valentinois ; and, lastly, of the gracious and serene figure of Madame de France, — the ruling spirit of this group, — daughter of François I., whom the peace had just betrothed to Emmanuel Philibert.

Round these charming faces, like butterflies round a bed of flowers, hovered all the poets of the time, — Ronsard, Du Bellay, Jodelle, Daurat, Rémy Belleau, and more sedate than those, although not less scholarly, the good Amyot, translator of Plutarch, preceptor of Prince Charles, chancellor of the Hospital, and private secretary to Madame Marguerite. These were all intimate friends ; each had the privilege known in the reign of Louis XIV., as the *grande* and *petite entrée*. At any hour of the day they had permission to call on Madame Marguerite, their protectress, though she held a special reception after dinner ; that is to say, from one to two o'clock in the afternoon.

The news of the peace — which something occurred daily to confirm, and whose preliminaries, it was announced, had already been signed — was received with different emotions by the members of the group whom we have just introduced to the reader. To some it caused smiles; to others tears. It may easily be conjectured that in this apportionment of joy and sorrow Mary Stuart and François II. could claim nothing; Fate had already decided as to their lot, and we have seen that neither complained.

The beautiful widow of Horace Farnese had also nothing to complain of. She was marrying a handsome and stately nobleman of about thirty-one, rich, and bearing a great name; the future had then for her that which time alone could reveal, the more or less of happiness which harmony of tastes or opposition of characters gives to a married pair.

The Princess Marguerite was the one who had received from the horn of plenty of that beautiful goddess who is called Peace the greatest share of hopes. We know how faithfully she had cherished the remembrance, ever since her journey to Nice, of a young prince of from twelve to fourteen years of age; now, after fifteen years of disappointments, of obstacles, even of impossibilities, behold suddenly the dream of her heart was to become reality, the vision to take form, and hope to be changed to certainty of happiness. One of the conditions of this peace — which it was reported was either signed or on the point of being — was her marriage with this little prince, who had since become, under the name of Emmanuel Philibert, one of the first captains of the age. Thus, we say again, Madame Marguerite was perfectly happy.

Alas! it was quite different with poor Élisabeth. Affianced first to the young Prince Carlos, who had sent

her his picture, and who had received hers in return, she had seen the unexpected death of Mary Tudor suddenly destroy her happiness at the moment when she believed it beyond the reach of attack. A widower, refused by Elizabeth of England, Philip II. fell back on Élisabeth of France; and by changing only two words in the treaty of peace, two, and even three, persons might be made wretched. Thus the words, "*Prince Carlos* will marry Princess Élisabeth of France," were erased, and "*King Philip* will marry Princess Élisabeth of France," were put in their place. Now, little imagination is required to conceive what a terrible blow these two words struck on the heart of the poor young girl, who without being consulted had thus to change her intended husband. At fifteen, instead of marrying a young prince of seventeen, handsome, chivalrous, loving, she was condemned to marry a king who was indeed still young, but old before his time, gloomy, suspicious, — a fanatic who would bury her in the rules of Spanish etiquette, the most rigid of all etiquette, and who instead of balls, fêtes, plays, and tournaments would provide her from time to time with the frightful diversion of an *auto-da-fé*.

The different persons whom we have just mentioned were, according to their custom, gathered together after dinner, early in the afternoon, in the apartments of Madame Marguerite, each dreaming of her joy or her grief. Madame Marguerite sat near an open window, through which shone a pale sunbeam, which seemed to revive in the gold of her hair; Élisabeth lay at Marguerite's feet, her head in the elder lady's lap; Diane de Castro sat in a large easy-chair reading some poems by Maître Ronsard; and Mary Stuart was playing on a sort of spinet — the venerable grandmother of the harpsichord, and ancestress of the piano — an Italian air which she had adapted to

words of her own composition. Suddenly Madame Marguerite, whose blue eyes appeared to seek some azure spot in the sky which should remind them whence they drew their color, emerged from the vague revery into which she had fallen, and deigning to bring back to earth her divine gaze, seemed to pay some attention to a scene which was passing in a court which communicated by a wicket gate, or rather postern, to the tongue of land which at that time led down a slope to the Seine, and which we improperly call the quay, knowing of no other name to give it.

"What is the matter?" asked Madame Marguerite, in that voice whose sweetness all the poets of the time sang, and which seemed to assume even greater sweetness when she addressed her inferiors than when she spoke to her equals.

Another voice from below made answer in a few words which reached her, since she was leaning out of the window, but which the other four persons who were in the room away from it did not hear, being preoccupied. However, as she finished the couplet which she was singing, Mary Stuart turned toward the Princess Marguerite, as though to ask the meaning of the conversation, only a few words of which she had caught, namely, those which the princess herself had uttered.

"My dear little queen," said Marguerite, replying to this silent question, "do ask my dear nephew, the dauphin, to pardon me for the great impropriety which I have just committed."

"Oh, dear aunt," said François, before Mary Stuart had time to speak, "we know that your so-called improprieties are so charming that they are pardoned beforehand, — that is, admitting that we have the right of punishment and of pardon."

"What, then, have you done, Madame?" asked Diane de Castro, raising her eyes from her book with a languor which showed that her thoughts concerned as much remembrances of the past or hopes for the future as what she had been reading.

"I have given two Italian pedlers leave to come up here, who only wish, they say, to show us the contents of their packs. The one, it seems, sells jewels, and the other materials for dresses."

"Oh!" cried little Queen Mary, clapping her hands like a child, "you are kind, dear aunt! Such beautiful jewels come from Florence, and such fine dress-stuffs from Venice."

"Let us go and fetch Madame de Valentinois," said Diane de Castro, moving toward the door, as though to go out.

But the Princess Marguerite stopped her. "Would it not be better, my dear Diane," said she, "to give our dear duchess a surprise? We might first choose some trifles to make her a present, — of course supposing that these pedlers have as good a stock as they claim, — and then we might send the pedlers themselves to her."

"You are always right, Madame," returned Diane de Castro, kissing the hand of the princess.

Madame Marguerite turned toward Élisabeth. "And you, my dear child," said she, "can we not get you to smile a little?"

"Why should I smile?" asked the young princess, turning toward Marguerite, her beautiful eyes bathed in tears.

"My child, you are with those who love you."

"I smile when I remember that I am with those who love me; but I weep when I think how soon I must leave them."

"Bah ! show some courage, sister !" said the Dauphin François. "The deuce ! King Philip is not so terrible, perhaps, as he is represented. Why, you always have the idea when you think of him that he is an old man ; but you must remember that he is quite young, only thirty-two, — exactly the age of François de Montmorency, who is to marry Sister Diane ; and you see that she does not complain."

Élisabeth sighed deeply. "I should not complain," said she, "if I had to marry one of these pedlers who are coming in, and I do complain bitterly at having to marry King Philip II."

"Ah !" said little Queen Mary, "the beautiful things they are going to show us will make your eyes brighten. Only, my dear sister, dry them, so that you may see better." And going up to Élisabeth, she tried to wipe her eyes with her handkerchief ; then kissing them, "There," she said, "I hear the pedlers."

Élisabeth tried to smile. "If among their materials there is a black worked with silver," said she, "you will know beforehand that I shall reserve it for my wedding-dress, and you will leave it for me, will you not, my sisters ?"

At this moment the door opened, and two men were seen in the antechamber dressed as pedlers, each carrying a pack on his back.

"Pardon, your Highness," said the usher, addressing the Princess Marguerite ; "but perhaps the people below did not understand —"

"Did not understand, — what do you mean ?" asked the princess.

"They say that your Highness has authorized these two men to come up here."

"They tell the truth," replied Marguerite.

"Then are these men permitted to enter?"

"Certainly."

"Come in, my good fellows," said the usher, turning toward the two pedlers, "and try to remember where you are."

"Oh, don't you worry, my dear fellow!" said, with a Piedmontese accent, the one who appeared the younger of the two, — a fine young man, fair and ruddy, with light beard and mustache; "it is not the first time that we have been in the house of a prince."

"Ah!" said the dauphin; "there's no occasion to ask where they come from." Then, in a lower tone, "Aunt Marguerite," said he, laughing, "they are most likely envoys in disguise, who have come to see whether their duke has not been deceived when he was told that you were the most charming princess in the world."

"In any case," replied Marguerite, "they are my future subjects, and you will not take it amiss if I treat them as such." Then, turning toward the pedlers, she said, "Come in, my friends."

"Come along, friend; don't you hear this beautiful lady — whom may God bless! — invite us to enter?" And setting the example to his companion, the fair-haired pedler, with ruddy skin and light beard, entered the room.

Behind him came his comrade, a man of about thirty-one, strongly built, with black eyes and a black beard, who under his coarse, dark-colored dress maintained an air of great distinction.

When she saw him, the Princess Marguerite with difficulty suppressed a cry, and made a gesture so marked that the light-haired pedler noticed it.

"What is it, fair lady?" he asked, laying his pack on the floor; "did you slip?"

"No," said Marguerite, smiling; "but seeing how hard

it was for your companion to put his pack down, I unconsciously made a motion as if to help him."

"Ah!" said the same person, who seemed up to the present to have undertaken to do all the talking, "that would be the first time that the hands of a princess had ever touched a pedler's pack! But you must know, Madame, that my friend has been only a short time in the business, and he is still rather clumsy. Is not that so, Beppo?"

"You are an Italian, my friend, are n't you?"

"Si, signora," replied, in Italian, the pedler with the black beard.

"And you come —"

"From Venice," continued he in the same language, "by way of Florence, Milan, and Turin. Now, when we reached Paris, as we learned there were to be grand doings here, on the occasion of the peace and of the marriage of the two illustrious princesses, we said to each other, my companion and I, that if we could only get into the palace and see their Highnesses, our fortune would be made."

"Ah! you see," said the other pedler, "when he can jabber his own lingo, he can get along almost as well as I."

"Indeed," resumed the dark-haired pedler, "I have been told that there are two or three princesses here who speak Italian like their mother-tongue."

Marguerite seemed to take infinite pleasure in talking with this man, in whose mouth the patois of Piedmont — the speech of peasants — seemed imbued with perfect elegance.

"Here," said she, "is my dear niece Mary, who speaks all the languages, and particularly that of Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto. Come, Mary, and ask this good man what

is the news from the beautiful land where, as the poet of the 'Inferno' says, the *si* is ever heard."

"And is there no beautiful princess who can speak Savoyard to me?" asked the fair-haired pedler.

"Oh, yes," said Marguerite, "I can."

"You speak Savoyard, you? No, that cannot be true."

"I do not speak it," said Marguerite, "but I want to learn it."

"Ah, you are right; it is a beautiful language."

"But," said little Queen Mary, in as pure Tuscan as could be heard from Pisa to Arezzo, "you have promised us wonderful things; and although we are princesses, we are also women. Do not keep us waiting too long."

"Ah!" said the dauphin, "it is clear that you do not yet know these talkative fellows from beyond the mountains. To hear them talk you would suppose they carried all the seven wonders of the world on their backs; but when their packs are opened, you find nothing but rock-crystal rings, diadems in filigree-work, and Roman pearls. You had better make haste, good sir, otherwise it will be the worse for you; for the longer you keep us waiting, the harder you will find it to manage us."

"What did his Highness say?" asked the dark-haired pedler, as though he had not understood.

The Princess Marguerite repeated in Italian what the young dauphin had just said, softening those words which might seem harsh to the dark-haired pedler, whom, as a Piedmontese, she seemed to have taken under her special protection.

"I am waiting," said the pedler, "until the beautiful young lady who is on the balcony, and who seems so sad, comes here. I have always noticed that in precious stones there is a magic effectual for drying tears in beautiful eyes, however bitter they may be."

"Do you hear, dear Élisabeth?" said Marguerite. "Come, get up and follow your sister Diane's example, who is already devouring with greedy eyes, through the lid of the box, the jewels which it contains."

Élisabeth rose carelessly, and leaned her pale and drooping head on the shoulder of her brother François.

"And now," said François, jestingly, "be ready to shut your eyes, that they may not be dazzled by what you are about to see."

And as if he had waited only for this invitation, the dark-bearded pedler opened his box; and, as the dauphin had anticipated, the ladies, used as they were to precious stones and rich jewelry, drew back dazzled, uttering a cry of joy and admiration.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WEDDING DRESSES AND ORNAMENTS.

INDEED, it seemed as though some genie had just opened before the princesses the entrance to one of the mines of Golconda or Visapoor, the four sides of the box were so resplendent with the blaze of diamonds, the blue, green, and red sheen of sapphires, emeralds, and rubies, in the midst of which pearls of every conceivable size and form shone with the strange beauty of their dull pallor. The princesses gazed as though astounded, mutely questioning one another as to the probability of their being rich enough to pay for all this magnificence which was offered for sale by a mere Italian pedler.

“Well,” asked Mary Stuart of the dauphin, “what do you say to all this, François?”

“I?” replied the astonished young prince. “I say nothing; I am astounded.”

The black-bearded pedler acted as though he understood nothing of the conversation around him; and as though he guessed what was said in regard to the Duchesse de Valentinois when he entered the room, and as though he knew the power possessed by the beautiful Diane de Poitiers in that princely and royal court in which he then was, he said, —

“Let us begin by remembering those who are absent; it is a pious duty, in regard to which those who are present cannot be angry, and those who are afar will be grateful.”

With these words the pedler thrust his hand into the wonderful box and drew forth a sort of diadem, which on its appearance was greeted with an exclamation of surprise from the beholders.

"Here," said the pedler, "is a diadem which is exceedingly simple, but which, simple as it is, seems to me, thanks to the skill of the illustrious goldsmith by whom it was chased, worthy of the lady for whom it is intended. You see that it is a threefold crescent, entwined as though in a love-knot; at the front the shepherd Endymion lies asleep; and here, in her mother-of-pearl chariot with diamond wheels, is the goddess Diana, who visits him in his sleep. Is not one of the princesses whom I see here named Diane de Castro?"

Diane, forgetting that the speaker was a mere foreign huckster, advanced with as much eagerness, and we may even say with as much politeness, as though he had been a prince of the blood, — such is the effect of a work of art, a jewel, or anything having princely value; it makes a prince of its possessor.

"I am she," said the princess.

"Illustrious princess," then said the pedler, "here is a jewel which is the work of Benvenuto Cellini at the command of Cosmo I. of Florence. I chanced to pass through Florence, where I saw the jewel for sale. Hoping to sell it advantageously at the court of France, I bought it, for I knew that I should find here two Dianas, instead of one. Tell me, would not that jewel marvellously become the marble forehead of Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois?"

Diane de Castro uttered a cry of delight. "Oh, mother, dear mother," said she, "how happy she will be!"

"Diane!" cried the dauphin, "you will tell her that that is a present from her children François and Mary."

"Since my lord has just mentioned those illustrious names," resumed the pedler, "will he be pleased to let me show him what, in my humble desire to be acceptable to those who bear them, I have brought with me for their inspection? See, my lord, this is a gold reliquary which belonged to Pope Leo X., and contains a piece of the true cross. The design for it was furnished by Michael Angelo, and was executed by Nicolas Braschi, of Ferrara; the ruby which is set above the space intended for the host was brought from India by the famous traveller Marco Polo. This magnificent trinket — you will pardon me, my lord — was, in my regard, intended for the young, beautiful, and illustrious queen Mary Stuart; it would never cease to remind her, in the land of heretics over which she will one day have to rule, that there is no true faith but the Catholic, and that it were better to die, like the Divine Man, a piece of whose precious cross is enclosed in this reliquary, than deny it, in order to be able, in consequence of that denial, to place on her head the triple crown of Scotland, Ireland, and England."

Mary Stuart had already held out both hands to take this noble legacy from the papacy, when François, hesitating, stopped her.

"But," he said, "we must be careful, Mary; this reliquary is worth a king's ransom."

A smile played on the sarcastic lip of the pedler; perhaps he thought of saying, "A king's ransom is not worth much when, as was the case with your grandfather, François I., it is not paid;" but he refrained, and said, —

"I bought it on credit, my lord; and as I have full confidence in the purchaser, I will sell it on credit."

And the reliquary passed from the foreign pedler's hands into those of Mary Stuart, who laid it on a table,

and knelt before it, not to adore, but to admire it at greater ease.

François, her very shadow, was about to follow her, when the pedler, calling him back, said, —

“Pardon, my lord, but here is something which I have procured especially for you. Will you do me the honor of examining this weapon?”

“Oh, what a splendid poniard!” cried François, snatching the dagger from the pedler’s hands, as Achilles snatched his sword from those of Ulysses.

“Is it not, my lord, a wonderful piece of armorer’s work?” said the pedler. “It is a poniard which was intended for Lorenzo de’ Medici, — a peaceful prince, whom some persons at times desired to kill, but who never killed any one. It is the work of the goldsmith Ghirlandajo, whose shop is on the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. It is said that this part,” here the pedler pointed to the hilt, “was modelled by Michael Angelo, then about fifteen. Lorenzo died before the poniard was finished, which remained in the possession of Ghirlandajo’s descendants for sixty-seven years. At the time of my visit to Florence they, being in need of money, had determined to sell it, and I bought it for a mere bagatelle. By selling it to you, my lord, I shall make only my travelling expenses. Take it, therefore, without hesitation; a trifle like that will not ruin a dauphin of France.”

The young prince uttered a cry of pleasure, drew the poniard from its sheath, and, to satisfy himself that the blade was not unworthy of its hilt, laid a gold piece on the carved-oak table before which Mary was kneeling, and with a blow delivered with much greater force than would have been expected from so weak a hand, bored a hole through the coin.

“Ah!” cried he joyously, showing the gold piece,

through which the point of the blade appeared, "could you do that, sir?"

"My lord," humbly replied the pedler, "I am a poor foreign merchant, ill trained in games worthy of princes and generals. I sell poniards, but I do not use them."

"Oh!" said the dauphin, "you seem to me, my friend, to be a man who on occasion could play with either sword or dagger as well as any man of the world. Try, then, to do what I have done; and if you unfortunately break the blade, well, the loss will be mine."

The pedler smiled. "If you insist, my lord," said he, "I will try."

"Good!" said François, feeling in his pockets for a second gold crown.

But in the mean time the pedler had drawn from the little leathern purse which hung at his girdle a double Spanish pistole, thrice as thick as the rose noble which the dauphin had just pierced, and laid it on the table. Then, seemingly without effort, and as though he had merely raised his arm and let it fall, he repeated the experiment of the young prince, but with a very different result; for after piercing the coin as though it were paste-board, the blade was buried from two to three inches into the oak table, boring a hole right through. Moreover, the blow was delivered exactly in the middle of the pistole; had the centre been taken with a compass, it could not have been more exact.

The pedler let the dauphin get the poniard out of the table as best he could, and went back to his jewels.

"And I, my friend," asked the widow of Horace Farnese, "have n't you anything for me?"

"Pardon me, Madame," replied the pedler. "Here is an exceedingly rich and original Arab bracelet; it was taken at Tunis, from the harem, when the Emperor

Charles V., of glorious memory, made his triumphant entry into that city in the year 1535. I bought it of an old mercenary who was with the emperor in that campaign, and I have saved it for you; if it does not please your ladyship, you may choose something else. You see we are not yet, thank God, at the end of our treasures."

And indeed the astonished eye of the young widow might gaze, as into a shining abyss, to the bottom of the pedler's box. But, as the trader had said, the bracelet was at the same time too original and too rich not to satisfy Diane de Castro's desires, highly imaginative as those desires were. The beautiful widow therefore took the bracelet in her hand, and appeared to busy herself with but one consideration, namely, how she could possibly pay for so splendid a purchase.

There were left only the Princess Élisabeth and the Princess Marguerite: the former waited for what was intended for her with sadness and indifference; the latter with calmness and conviction.

"Madame," said the pedler to King Philip's betrothed, "although I have set something aside to be shown to your Highness, would you not prefer to choose among these jewels yourself? Your heart seems so little interested in these rich trifles that I fear lest I have nothing to suit your taste, wherefore I should like you to choose yourself."

Élisabeth seemed to be roused from a deep revery. "What is it that you ask me? What do you want of me?"

Then Marguerite, taking from the pedler's hands a splendid necklace of pearls in five rows, fastened by a diamond as large as a nut, and worth a million francs, replied, —

"My dear little niece, they wish you to try on this necklace, just to see how it will become your neck, or, better, how your neck will become it."

She thereupon fastened the necklace around Élisabeth's throat, pushing her aside to a Venetian mirror, that she herself might judge as to the effect of the pearls on her throat, or of her throat on the pearls.

But the girl, still lost in her grief, absently passed on, without stopping before the mirror, and went to sit down before the window where she had sat when the pedler entered the room. Marguerite watched her sadly, and remarked as she turned that the eyes of the pedler were gazing in the same direction as her own, and with an expression of sadness not less real.

"Alas!" she murmured, "all the pearls of the Orient could not light up *that* forehead." Then, turning toward the pedler, and as though throwing aside the veil of melancholy which had settled on her face, she said, "And am I the only one forgotten?"

"Madame," replied the pedler, "fate, or rather my good fortune, caused me to meet Prince Emmanuel Philibert on my way hither. As I am from Piedmont, and consequently his subject, I told him the object of my journey, and that I hoped to have the honor of seeing your Highness. Therefore, in the event of my succeeding in my aim, he intrusted me with this belt, which was offered by his father, Charles III., to his mother, Beatrix of Portugal, on the day of their marriage. As you see, it is a gold serpent enamelled with blue, from the mouth of which is suspended a gold chain, to which are attached five keys of the same metal; these are the keys of Turin, Chambéry, Nice, Verceil, and Villa Nuova d'Asti, blazoned with the arms of those towns, the five gems of your crown; each of them opens in the palace of Turin a

drawer, which you will open yourself on the day of your entrance there as reigning Duchess of Piedmont. After this belt, what, Madame, could I offer worthy of you? Absolutely nothing, — except, perhaps, some of the rich dress materials which my companion will have the honor of showing you.”

Then the other pedler opened his box in his turn, and displayed to the wondering eyes of the princesses a dazzling collection of those magnificent scarfs from Algiers, Tunis, or Smyrna which seem brocaded with African or Turkish sunbeams; an assortment of those rich stuffs, embroidered with gold and silver flowers, which Paul Veronese throws over the aristocratic shoulders of his doges and duchesses, and which, after falling in graceful folds around them, sweep the steps of the palaces or churches behind; lastly, a choice of those long pieces of satin which, passing from the East to the West at this period, made a momentary stay at Venice, whence they were carried to Antwerp, Brussels, and Ghent, where they were exhibited to the beautiful eyes of the ladies of those cities, which then formed a threefold caravan-sary. Thence were distributed throughout France, England and Spain marvellous specimens of Chinese and Indian patience, on which the needle had traced in colors brighter than Nature herself provides, quite a world of fantastic birds, unknown flowers, and impossible forms.

The princesses hastened to divide these treasures with that feverish eagerness which seizes every woman of whatever condition, at the sight of these means of personal adornment, which according to her ideas must ever add to the charms which she has received from Nature; and within a quarter of an hour the fair-haired pedler had made as complete a sale of his stuffs as the dark-haired

and dark-bearded pedler had of his jewels and precious stones.

Nothing remained now, then, but to settle accounts with the two foreign traders; and for this purpose each had privately devised means: Diane de Castro determined to have recourse to the Duchesse de Valentinois; Mary Stuart to her uncles the Guises; the dauphin to his father, Henri II.; Madame Marguerite to her own purse. As for the Princess Élisabeth, who had scarcely heeded what was passing around her, she was so self-absorbed that she busied herself with neither purchase nor payment.

But just as the beautiful purchasers were about to make arrangements to pay for these costly wares, — some going to their own purses and others to purses better filled than their own, — the traders declared that they could not then and there say what the price of the jewels or stuffs would be, and that it would be necessary for them to consult their invoices and refer to their books, so that they should make no mistake in the affair. Wherefore they asked permission of their illustrious customers to return on the morrow at the same hour, — a device which had the double advantage of giving the sellers time to make sure of their figures, and the buyers leisure to procure the necessary money. Therefore, after making this proposal, which pleased everybody, the two pedlers adroitly hoisted their packs on their shoulders, and each, with profuse thanks and bows, took leave of the august company, — the one in the Savoyard, and the other in the Piedmontese dialect.

But during these preparations for departure Marguerite had disappeared, and the eyes of the Piedmontese vainly sought the princess as the door of the apartment closed in which the strange scene which we have just related took

place. As he passed through the antechamber, however, he was accosted by a page, who, touching him on the shoulder, signed to him to lay down his pack near the bench of carved oak which ran around the apartment and to follow him. The pedler obeyed, laid his pack down where he was directed, and followed the page along a corridor into which several doors led. At the sound of his steps one of these opened; he turned his head, and found himself face to face with the Princess Marguerite. At the same time the page disappeared behind a tapestry. The pedler stopped, astonished.

"Oh, seller of jewels," said the princess, with an entrancing smile, "do not be surprised that I have sent for you here. I did not wish to defer till to-morrow the only payment which is worthy of us both, lest I should not see you then." And with the perfect grace which characterized all her movements, the princess held out her hand to the pedler, who, with the courtesy of high breeding, bent one knee to the ground, took the white hand in his own, and kissed it lightly, with a sigh which the princess attributed to emotion, but which perhaps expressed no more than regret. Then, after a momentary silence, the pedler said, this time in excellent French, —

"Madame, your Highness does me a great honor; but do you really know whom you thus distinguish?"

"Monseigneur," said Marguerite, "it is now seventeen years since I visited the castle of Nice, where Charles of Savoy presented to me his son, as my future husband. From that day to this I have considered myself as the betrothed of Prince Emmanuel Philibert, and have awaited the hour, full of confidence in God, until it should please Providence to unite us. God has rewarded my confidence in making me to-day the happiest and proudest princess on earth." Then, thinking that she had said enough for

her purpose, the princess, by a double movement, swift as thought, with one hand threw around Emmanuel Philibert's neck the gold chain, studded with jewels, which she wore around her own, while with the other she let fall the tapestry which separated her from him with whom she had just exchanged betrothal presents.

The next and following days the two pedlers were vainly expected at the Louvre; and as the Princess Marguerite took no one into her confidence in regard to what had occurred after they had left the salon, those whose conjectures were nearest the truth imagined that the generous givers of jewels and gowns were envoys of the prince, intrusted by him with his wedding-presents; but no one went so far as to suppose that one of the two was Emmanuel Philibert, and the other his faithful and inseparable Scianca-Ferro.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT PASSED AT THE CHÂTEAU DES TOURNELLES AND IN THE STREETS OF PARIS DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF JUNE, 1559.

On the 5th of June, 1559, a splendid cavalcade, consisting of ten trumpeters, a king-at-arms, four heralds, a hundred and twenty pages, — some attached to the royal chambers, some to the royal stables, some whose duties were confined to hunting, to falconry, etc., and others, — with from thirty to forty squires, who closed the procession, emerged from the Palais Royale des Tournelles, which was situated near the Bastille, passed along the Rue St. Antoine, followed by a great concourse of people, who had never seen such grandeur, and stopped in the square before the Hôtel de Ville. There the trumpets sounded thrice, to give the windows time to open and every one to join the crowd; then when the crowd was packed as thickly as possible, when all the eyes of this populace were fixed on them, and every ear was open, the king-at-arms unfolded a broad parchment sealed with the royal seal, and after the heralds had thrice shouted, "Silence! Listen to what is about to be read!" the king-at-arms began to read the following proclamation:—

IN THE KING'S NAME :

After a long, cruel, and unnatural war, in which great deeds of arms have been wrought in divers places, with great shedding of human blood and other pernicious acts, the natural result of

war, it has pleased God in his sovereign grace, clemency, and goodness, to give to the whole of Christendom, afflicted by so many evils, the blessing of a sure and lasting peace. It is therefore only reasonable that every one should regard it as a duty to praise and celebrate with demonstrations of joy and gladness so great a blessing, which has changed enmities into friendships, and bitternesses into kindly feelings, by the close alliances of blood made in consequence of the marriages agreed upon by the treaty of the aforesaid peace; to wit, —

Of the high, mighty, and magnanimous Prince Philip, catholic King of Spain, with the high, mighty, and excellent Princess Élisabeth, eldest daughter of the high, mighty, and magnanimous Prince Henri, second of the name, most Christian king of France, our sovereign lord.

Also of the high and mighty Prince Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, with the mighty and excellent princess Madame Marguerite de France, Duchesse de Berry, only sister of the said most Christian king, our sovereign lord, —

Who, mindful that, thanks to the opportunities which are offered and presented, weapons, diverted from all cruelty and violence, may and ought to be used, with pleasure and profit, by those who desire to manifest and exercise themselves in virtuous and praiseworthy acts and deeds, — in consequence proclaims to all princes, lords, nobles, knights, and squires who follow the profession of arms, and are desirous of manifesting in their own persons their skill, in order to excite youth to virtue, and to commend the prowess of those who have acquired experience, that in the capital city of Paris the lists will be opened by his Most Christian Majesty and by the princes Alphonso, Duke of Ferrara, François de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, peer and grand chamberlain of France, and Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours, all knights of the Order, and held against all comers duly qualified.

The jousts will begin on the sixteenth day of the present month of June, and will continue until the accomplishment of the enterprises and articles which follow. The first joust to be on horseback in the lists, and to consist of four courses with the lance, and one in honor of the lady. The second,

with the sword, on horseback, one to one, or two to two, at the discretion of the marshals. The third to be on foot, with pike and sword, — three blows with the pike, and six sword-strokes. And if in the course a horse should be struck, instead of a knight, the assailant shall be put outside the lists, and shall not return except at the king's command.

That everything may be done decently and in order, four marshals of the lists will be appointed. That one of the assailants who shall have broken the greatest number of lances and have fought the best shall be adjudged the prize, at the discretion of the judges. Also, he who shall have fought best with sword and pike shall have a prize, likewise at the discretion of the judges.

All combatants shall be bound, as well subjects of this realm as aliens, to touch with the lance one of the shields hanging at the threshold of the lists, according to what deeds they wish to perform. They will be at liberty to touch one or all of the shields, in their discretion ; and an officer of arms will be in attendance who shall enroll them according to the shields which they shall have touched. Each combatant shall also be bound to bring, or cause to be brought by a squire, to the said officer, his shield, on which shall be engraved his arms, that each shield may hang for three days on the threshold before the beginning of the tourney. And any combatant who during the said time shall omit to bring or send his shield, shall not be entered in the lists without leave of the challengers.

And as witness to the truth of the above, we Henri, by the grace of God king of France, have signed this writing with our own hand.

Signed :

HENRI.

This proclamation having been read, the four heralds cried thrice : "Long live King Henri! May God grant him long and glorious days!"

Then all the officials — king-at-arms, heralds, pages, and squires — repeated these words, which were followed by acclamations from the crowd ; after which the cavalcade

resumed its march, the trumpets still sounding at intervals, crossed the river, ascended the Cité to the precincts of Notre Dame, and stopping there, read the same proclamation, with the same ceremonial, which was followed by similar cries and trumpet blasts. At last, by the same route which it had taken before, the cavalcade returned to the city, reached the Rue St. Honoré, and gained the square in front of the Louvre, where a fresh reading of the proclamation was made, still amid the same acclamations of the multitude, who appeared to understand that this spectacle was the last of its kind which they would be allowed to witness. Thence, following the exterior boulevards, the cavalcade regained the Palais des Tournelles, whither the king and court had repaired.

Indeed, eight days previous the king had been advised that the Duke of Alva, who was to represent King Philip in the marriage ceremony and in the festivities which were to follow it, was approaching Paris with a band of three hundred Spanish nobles. On the receipt of these tidings the king forthwith left the Louvre and repaired to the Palais des Tournelles, where he proposed to remain with the court as long as the festivities should last, giving up the Louvre to the Duke of Alva and his suite.

The constable was immediately despatched to meet the duke. This he did at Noyon, and the ambassador of King Philip and he journeyed together to Paris. On their arrival at St. Denis, the constable and the duke saw Monsieur le Maréchal de Vieilleville, superintendent-general, approach, who was sent by the king to take care that the Spaniards were treated in a manner becoming the guests of the King of France.

Two hours after, on a beautiful morning, the last Sun-

day in May, the cavalcade, consisting of more than five hundred horsemen, princes, lords, knights, squires, and pages, completely refreshed and recovered from the fatigues of the journey, made its entrance into Paris. Monsieur de Vieilleville led the Spaniards across Paris, from the barrier of St. Denis to that of Sergents ; then he repaired to the palace of the Louvre, where the Duke of Alva and his principal gentlemen were to be lodged. Quarters for the inferior members of his suite, however, were found in the Rue St. Honoré. Thus, at the reading of the proclamation in the square in front of the Louvre, there were almost as many Spaniards as Frenchmen present ; and at its conclusion the cheers which followed were in both French and Spanish.

Now, if the reader who has just followed the royal proclamation from the Château des Tournelles to the square in front of the Hôtel de Ville, thence to the precincts of Notre Dame, and thence to the Louvre, will accompany it back to the Château des Tournelles, whence it was issued two hours before, we shall profit by his kindness to examine with him the great preparations which the king has just made there on the occasion of the jousts announced by the proclamation which we have thought wise to reproduce in its entirety, long as it was, not only as a curious and authentic document, but as throwing light on the manners and customs of this period, when the last breath of chivalry vanished from France ; and also because the laws of this tournament will help us better to understand the events which are about to take place.

The exterior lists — and by this term we mean the entire circumference of the construction — were erected on the piece of waste land lying between the Château des Tournelles and the Bastille ; it was two hundred yards

long by a hundred and fifty broad. The oblong framework of these lists was made of boards covered with a sort of canvas awning, striped with blue and gold, the heraldic colors of France. On two lateral extensions galleries were erected for favored spectators, — noblemen and ladies of the court. On the side nearest the castle were three gateways very similar to those of a triumphal arch, the one in the middle being higher than the two others. The middle gateway, which extended from twelve to fifteen feet into the lists, was the means of entrance and exit from a pavilion in which were to be found the four champions who held themselves in readiness to receive all challenges. In front of this pavilion there was a barrier, which the squires opened to the cry of “*Laissez aller !*”

As we have already said, the four champions were the King of France, Henri II. ; the Prince of Ferrara, Alphonso d'Este ; François de Lorraine, Duc de Guise ; and Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours. Four flagstuffs, with pennants, bore each a shield with the arms of one of the illustrious champions ; the assailants, who entered the lists from the side opposite to the castle, — where a large pavilion had been erected, in which the combatants could robe and disrobe, — were to touch with the reverse of their lances the shield of the challenger with whom they were desirous of engaging, to show that a mere course in honor of the ladies was all that they desired, — a joust with blunted weapons. On this side also, as well as on that of the castle, a barrier had been erected, which could afford passage to a horse and rider. Doubtless, notwithstanding this precaution, that might occur which almost always did in similar circumstances ; namely, some strong hatred might suddenly arise, or some unknown knight might ask from the king permission to engage in a combat *à outrance*, instead of in a joust with

blunted weapons, and having obtained this permission from Henri, who would not have the courage to refuse him, would touch his adversary's shield with the point of his lance, instead of the reverse. Then, in place of a sham affair, there would be a combat to the death; instead of playing an ordinary game, the combatants would play for their lives.

The inner lists—in which the courses actually took place—were fifteen by forty-five feet,—which allowed the combatants to engage one against one, or two against two, or even four against four. Along the sides of this list was a wooden balustrade about three feet high, which was hung with the same material as the awning was made of. Barriers were erected, two at each extremity, allowing the judges of the field to enter the lists, or any assailant—if he should obtain permission from the king to tilt with one of the marshals instead of the challengers—to pass from the lists to the large quadrilateral reserved, to the right and left, to the marshals, that he might touch with either end of his lance the shield of him with whom he wished to engage.

There were as many marshals as challengers; namely, four,—the Prince of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert, the Constable de Montmorency, Monsieur de Boissy, master of the horse (known as Monsieur le Grand), and Monsieur de Vieilleville, Grand Chamberlain and Marshal of France.

Each of the marshals had a stand at one corner of the quadrilateral,—a small pavilion surmounted by his arms. Two of these pavilions—those of the Duke of Savoy and of the constable—were erected near the façade of the Câteau des Tournelles; the two others—those of Messieurs de Boissy and de Vieilleville—stood close to the building constructed for the assailants. The upper side of the pavilion of the challengers formed the balcony

reserved for the queen, the princes, and the princesses ; it was hung with brocade, and a sort of throne had been erected for the queen, and armchairs provided for the princes and princesses, and stools for the ladies of the court.

As yet all this space was empty ; but it was visited daily by the king, whose impatience counted the moments until challengers and their antagonists, marshals and spectators, should be present.

CHAPTER IX.

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND.

ON the 20th of June a cavalcade not less splendid than that headed by the Duke of Alva arrived from Brussels by the same road, and entered Paris by the same gate ; at its head was Emmanuel Philibert, future husband of Madame Marguerite de France, Duchesse de Berry. At Écouen a halt was made. It might then have been noticed that the prince had entered, together with his page, a house where they seemed to be expected. This house, surrounded by a mass of green, was situated outside the town, and stood back about a hundred yards from the road. The members of the escort, who did not seem to be surprised at this disappearance of the prince, halted on the other side of the road, and waited.

After a couple of hours the prince reappeared alone ; he had on his lips the smile of one who has submitted to a great sacrifice. The attendants whispered to one another that his page, who had never before left his side, did not return.

"Come, gentlemen," said Emmanuel, "they are waiting for us in Paris ; let us start." Then, turning his head with a sigh, as though he asked from the person whom he had left behind, a last encouragement for the fulfilment of a painful duty, he galloped to the head of the escort, which stretched across the road leading to Paris.

At St. Denis Emmanuel Philibert met his former prisoner, the constable, who came to meet him, as he had

been sent before to meet the Duke of Alva, on behalf of the king, and to congratulate him. Emmanuel received the constable's compliments gravely and sadly ; he had the appearance of a man who was indeed journeying to Paris, but who had left his heart behind him on the way.

Between Paris and St. Denis the prince saw a large retinue approaching, which it was evident had come for the purpose of joining his escort ; he therefore sent forward Robert de Rovère, captain of his guard, to meet them. This retinue, consisting of two hundred Savoyard and Piedmontese noblemen attired in black velvet, and each wearing a gold chain around his neck, joined the escort of Emmanuel Philibert ; at its head was Comte de Raconis.

When the prince and his escort arrived at the barrier, they saw a squire—who doubtless was on the watch for them—set off at a gallop toward the Faubourg St. Antoine. This was a king's messenger, who immediately hurried off to announce the arrival of the prince. At the Boulevard the escort turned to the left and proceeded toward the Bastille.

The king awaited the prince at the foot of the steps leading to the Château des Tournelles, holding the hand of his sister Madame Marguerite ; behind him, on the top step, were Queen Catherine and her five children ; while on the other steps were grouped the princesses and the lords and ladies in waiting. Emmanuel Philibert drew rein ten yards from the steps and leaped to the ground ; then he went up to the king, whose hand he would have kissed ; but the latter, opening wide his arms, cried, —

“Embrace me, my dear brother.”

Then the king introduced him to his sister, Madame Marguerite, who was attired in a rose-colored velvet gown, slashed with white. The only ornament which she wore

was the splendid belt with the five gold keys with which the pedler at the Louvre had presented her from her future husband. As Emmanuel drew near, the rose of her gown seemed to overspread her cheeks ; she gave him her hand, which the prince gracefully kissed, bending on one knee, — thus performing the same graceful act at Des Tournelles that the pedler had performed at the Louvre. The Prince of Savoy was then presented in turn by the king to the queen, to the princes, and to the princesses, — these last wearing the jewels which had been taken from the Piedmontese pedler's pack, which were understood to be presents from the betrothed prince when, after waiting, it was found that the foreign traders did not return to claim the money for them. Madame de Valentino wore as a diadem her triple crescent of diamonds, Madame Diane de Castro her Arabian bracelet, Madame Élisabeth her pearl necklace, — less pale than her throat, — and the dauphin, François, his splendid poniard, which he had succeeded in drawing from the oak table in which the strong pedler had buried it. Mary Stuart alone refrained from adorning herself with her precious relic, which became the most valuable ornament of her oratory, and which, thirty years afterward, on the night before her death, at Fotheringay Castle, was to receive the holy wafer from Rome, with which she communicated on the day of her execution.

In his turn, Emmanuel Philibert presented to the king the lords and gentlemen of his suite. Among them were Counts Horn and Egmont, — those two heroes, the one of St. Lawrence's, the other of Gravelines, who were nine years later to die as martyrs for the same faith, on the same scaffold, condemned by the Duke of Alva, who in the suite of the King of France smiled on them and waited to grasp their hands. Among them was William

of Nassau, a handsome young man of twenty-six, over whom fell even then the shadow of that sadness which later was to procure for him the epithet of "Silent," and who was called Prince of Orange because in 1545 he inherited the principality of Orange from his uncle, René of Nassau. Among them were, lastly, the Dukes of Brunswick and the Counts of Schwartzburg and Mansfeld, who were more fortunate than the men whom we have just named; for about their death the gloomy shadow of the scaffold or of assassination did not lower.

Then suddenly, as though nothing should be lacking to this gathering of men and women whom Fate had beforehand marked as her own, a horseman was remarked approaching at full gallop, who, seeing the splendid assembly collected around the gate of Des Tournelles, reined in his horse, dismounted, threw the bridle to his squire, and waited until the king addressed him. And this horseman might justly feel self-confident; he had ridden up at a pace too rapid, he had too skilfully reined in his horse, he had dismounted too gracefully for Henri, splendid horseman that he was, to avoid noticing him. Wherefore, turning from the brilliant assemblage, the king said, —

"Ah! Lorges! Lorges! the captain of our Scottish guard, whom we sent with three thousand men to the assistance of your mother, my dear Mary, and who in order that everything should be complete to-day is come bringing news from your kingdom of Scotland. Now," continued the king, "come here, Montgomery; and as we are about to have grand fêtes and great rejoicings, beware of the firebrands! There is an old adage which bids us never play with fire."

We must explain to our readers here that King Henri alluded to the accident which had occurred by James Montgomery, father of Gabriel, at the sham siege of the

mansion of St. Paul, which he was defending against King François I., inadvertently touching the king's chin with a quick firebrand, thus making a wound which was the cause of the introduction of the fashion of wearing the beard long and the hair short,—a custom which lasted for more than a hundred years.

Montgomery stepped up to the king without dreaming for a moment that an accident infinitely more serious in its consequences than that of which his father had been the cause to the king's father was to occur to the son through him, during those very fêtes which Henri was anticipating with such great joy. He brought back from Scotland good news as regarded politics, but bad in respect to religion. Elizabeth of England was at peace with her neighbor, and the borders were quiet ; but the Lowlands of Scotland were on fire. The conflagration was in consequence of the Reformation, and the incendiary was John Knox.

This terrible name had hardly ever been heard in France when Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, uttered it. Indeed, what cared that elegant court of the Valois, which lived in the castles of the Louvre, of Des Tournelles, and of Fontainebleau ; what cared François I., with his Duchesse d'Étampes, his Lionardo da Vinci, his Andrea del Sarto, his Benvenuto Cellini, his Bosso, his Primatice, with Rabelais, Budé, Lascaris, and Marot ; what cared Henri II., with his Duchesse de Valentinois, with Ronsard, Philibert Delorme, Montaigne, De Bèze, Du Bellay, Amyot, the chancellor of the Hospital, Jean Goujon, Serlio, Germain Pilon, Catherine de Medici, and her maids of honor,—what cared this brilliant world, frivolous, brave, godless, in whose veins flowed French and Italian blood, which constantly blended history and romance, chivalry and politics, which claimed its origin

from Paris, Rome, Athens, and Cordova; what cared all these kings, princes, princesses, lords, sculptors, painters, men of letters, architects, illuminated by the rainbow of glory, art, and poetry, — what cared all these for what happened in a corner of the globe which they regarded as the confines of civilization, among people who were poor, ignorant, debased, whose land was regarded as an appanage of the crown of France, as one of those ornaments, more curious on account of its metal than of the quality of work bestowed on it, which a queen attaches to the clasp of the chain which she wears at her belt? Was this land one day to revolt against its young king François or its young queen Mary? Well, they would set sail in golden ships, like William when he conquered England, or Roger when he conquered Sicily. They would take Scotland and lay her, with a gold bracelet around her ankles like a chain, in the lap of the granddaughter of Edward and the daughter of James V.

But now Gabriel de Lorges came to give the French court more accurate notions in regard to Scotland; he came to make Mary Stuart understand that her chief enemy was not Elizabeth, the illustrious queen of England, but a renegade priest of low origin named John Knox. De Lorges had seen this Knox in the midst of a popular tumult, and he had left a terrible impression on the captain of the Scottish guard, which he endeavored so to magnify in the eyes of the future queen of Scotland that she should see matters as he himself saw them. De Lorges followed John Knox during this tumult, which the latter described in the following language: —

“I saw the idol Dagon [the crucifix] lie broken on the pavement, and priests and monks flee headlong, crosier in hand, mitres broken, surplices dragging along the ground, skull caps in rags; Gray friars began to open their mouths,

Black friars to fill out their cheeks, and sextons, breathless, to fly off like crows ; and lucky were they who first got home ; for never has a panic like it been seen among this generation of Antichrist."

He who had raised such a storm had need to be, and he was, a Titan ; indeed, John Knox was one of those men whom great religious and political revolutions invariably beget. Born in Scotland or England during the Presbyterian Reformation, they are called John Knox or Oliver Cromwell ; born in France in the time of political reform, they are called Mirabeau or Danton.

Knox was born in the Lothians in 1505 ; at the period which we are now considering he was therefore fifty-four years old. He was on the point of taking holy orders when the voice of Luther echoed from Worms to Edinburgh ; straightway John Knox began to preach, with all the vehemence natural to his temperament, against the pope and the Mass. Appointed in 1552 chaplain to Edward VI. of England, he was driven from England when Mary Tudor (known as Bloody Mary) ascended the throne, and he repaired to Geneva, the city of Calvin. On the death of Mary and the accession of Elizabeth, considering the time favorable, he returned to Scotland, and brought with him some thousands of copies of a pamphlet which he had had printed at Geneva, which contained an attack against both the regency of Mary of Lorraine and the future government of Mary Stuart. This pamphlet was entitled "First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women." In his absence the tree of Reformation, planted by him, had grown, and now covered two thirds of Scotland with its shade. When he left her, Scotland was a Catholic country ; when he returned, she was Protestant. This therefore was the man whom Mary Stuart had most to fear.

But what could Mary Stuart have to fear? Scotland was for her not only distant in space, but it was only in the distant future that her interests could possibly be affected by it. Why need she trouble herself about Scotland, — she, the daughter-in-law of a man scarcely forty-one, strong, stout, high-spirited, as a young man; she, the wife of a boy of nineteen? What was the worst prophecy that could be made in regard to her? That her father-in-law should reign twenty years, and that her husband should live forty. But we must not forget that scions of the house of Valois died young. Why need Mary Stuart trouble herself about that wild rose, grown among rocks, which was known as the crown of Scotland, when she had in view that crown of France which, according to the Emperor Maximilian, God would give to his second son, if he should have two?

There was indeed the horoscope which a soothsayer had drawn up at the birth of Henri II., which the Constable of France had made such fun of that the king had intrusted it to Monsieur d'Aubespine, and which said that King Henri II. would be killed, either in a duel or a single combat. There was, moreover, the fatal mark which Gabriel de Lorges had between his eyebrows, and which had caused Charles V. so much uneasiness until his astrologer told him that this mark threatened only a prince of the fleur-de-lis.

But what likelihood was there that one of the greatest princes in Christendom should ever fight a duel? What likelihood also was there that Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, one of the nobles to his person most devoted in Henri's court, captain of his Scottish guard, who had nearly been the means of saving his life in the wild-boar hunt in the forest of St. Germain which we have already described to our readers, — what likelihood

was there that he would raise a parricidal hand against the king, whose death moreover would ruin his fortunes?

Neither fact nor prophecy, nor present nor future, therefore could sadden, even momentarily, the beautiful faces of that joyous court when the great bell of Notre Dame announced that all was ready, even God himself, for the first of the weddings that were to be celebrated,— that of King Philip II., represented by the Duke of Alva, with Élisabeth of France, who was called “Élisabeth de la Paix,” because of the influence which her marriage was to have on the peace of the world.

CHAPTER X.

THE JOUSTS OF THE RUE ST. ANTOINE.

ON the 27th of June, 1559, the great bell of Notre Dame, shaking the ancient towers of Philip Augustus, announced the marriage ceremony of the King of Spain with the daughter of the King of France. The Duke of Alva, accompanied by the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont, represented, as the reader knows, King Philip II.

When she reached the yard of the metropolitan church, poor Élisabeth's limbs failed her, and she had to be supported, almost carried, into the nave. Count Egmont and William of Orange, two men on whom Fate had set her seal, — the one was to die on the scaffold by command of the Duke of Alva, the other was to fall by the ball of Balthasar Gerard, — rendered her this sad service. Emmanuel Philibert regarded her with a sympathetic smile, whose significance Scianca-Ferro — the only person who knew what the prince had left behind at Écouen — was alone able properly to understand.

After the ceremony the court returned to the Château des Tournelles, where a grand dinner was given. The day was passed in listening to music, and in the evening Emmanuel Philibert opened the ball with the young queen of Spain, who had no other consolation than the absence of her royal husband, whom she was not to see for some days; Jacques de Nemours danced with the Princess Marguerite; François de Montmorency with

Diane de Castro; and the dauphin, whom we ought to have mentioned first, with Queen Mary Stuart.

Friends and enemies were united there for the moment; all those great hatreds appeared, if not extinguished, at least concealed for the time. Only friends and enemies formed two groups, clearly separated. On the one hand were the constable with all his sons, — Coligny, Dandelot, and their followers; on the other, François de Guise with his brothers, — the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Duc d'Aumale, the Duc d'Elbeuf, and — But we forget the names of these six sons of the same father. The first group were gay, triumphant, joyous; the last were sad, serious, threatening. It might reasonably have been anticipated that if on the morrow a Montmorency should chance to meet a Guise, instead of a joust there would be a real combat. But Henri had taken proper precautions. He forbade Coligny and Dandelot to touch any shields except his own or those of Jacques de Nemours and Alphonse d'Este; and a similar interdiction had been put upon Damville and François de Montmorency.

The Guises had at first wished to withdraw from the festivals, Duke François urging the necessity of a visit to his principality; but Catherine de' Medici and the Cardinal de Lorraine induced him to reconsider his resolution, which they declared was imprudent, — as are usually those which are inspired by vexation and pride. He determined therefore to remain; and the event showed the wisdom of his resolution.

At midnight the company separated. The Duke of Alva led Élisabeth to her chamber, put his right leg into the bed, and covered it with the bed-clothes; then, a few moments later, he withdrew it, bowed, and left the room. The marriage ceremony was concluded.

On the next day the courtiers were awakened by the

blare of trumpets, — all except King Henri, who had not been able to sleep, such was his impatience until the jousts should be actually held, to which he had looked forward so long. Wherefore, though the tournament was not to begin until after breakfast, at daybreak the king sauntered into the lists with the squires, and went again to see his magnificent stud, to which Emmanuel Philibert had just added — a splendid present — nineteen horses, all saddled and caparisoned.

When breakfast-time came, challengers and marshals ate by themselves at a round table, which recalled that of King Arthur, and were waited upon by ladies. The four servants of the illustrious table-companions were Queen Catherine, the Princess Marguerite, little Queen Mary, and the Duchesse de Valentinois. Breakfast over, each knight repaired to his own apartment and donned his armor and weapons.

The king wore a splendid Milanese cuirass, damascened with gold and silver; his helmet, surmounted by the royal crown, was in the form of a salamander with outspread wings; his shield, like that which hung from the platform, bore a crescent shining in a cloudless sky, with this device, — *Donec totum impleat orbem!* His colors were white and black, — those which Diane de Poitiers had adopted on the death of Monsieur de Brézé, her husband.

Monsieur de Guise had put on the same armor which he wore at the siege of Metz; on the breastplate was plainly to be seen the impress — which may be seen to-day in the Musée d'Artillerie at Paris, where it is on exhibition — left by the five balls which struck him at that siege, and which were flattened against the friendly steel. His shield, like that of the king, represented a sky; only, unlike the royal shield, it was not cloudless, —

a white cloud veiled a gold star. His device was, — *At hand, but concealed*. His colors were white and carnation, — “the colors,” says Brantôme, “of a lady whom I could name, — a lady of the court, whose servant he claimed to be.” Unfortunately, Brantôme does not give the lady’s name, and we are compelled, in consequence of the ignorance in which he leaves us, to be as discreet as he.

Monsieur de Nemours had a Milanese cuirass, — a present from King Henri; his shield represented an angel or a love (it was not easy to make out which) bearing a bouquet of flowers, with this device, — *Angel or love, he comes from heaven*. This device was an allusion to what had happened to this handsome prince in Naples at the feast of Corpus Christi. As he was following the procession, with some other French nobles, the figure of an angel, sliding along an iron rod which had been hung out for this purpose, came down from a window and presented him with a splendid bouquet from a lady. Hence the device, “Angel or love, he comes from heaven.” His colors were yellow and black, — colors which, again on the authority of Brantôme, signified “Pleasure and constancy,” or “Constant in pleasure;” “for he was then, in popular estimation, beloved by one of the most beautiful ladies of the world, and it behooved him to be constant and faithful to her.”

Lastly, the Duke of Ferrara — that young prince as yet unknown at this period, but who later was to gain the unenviable notoriety of having imprisoned Tasso for seven years in an insane asylum — wore a splendid Venetian cuirass. His shield represented Hercules slaying the Nemean lion, with this device, — *God alone is strong*. His colors were yellow and red.

At midday the gates were opened, and in a moment

the places reserved on the platforms were occupied by the lords and ladies of the court who had the right of being present at these festivals. Afterward the royal balcony was filled up.

On the first day Madame de Valentinois was to give the prize, — a magnificent chain, resplendent with rubies, sapphires, and emeralds, divided by gold crescents fastened in a threefold manner. These crescents were, as we know, the arms of the beautiful Duchesse de Valentinois.

On the second day the victor was to be crowned by the hand of Madame Marguerite. The prize was a Turkish battle-axe, exquisitely ornamented, which had been presented to François I. by Sultan Suleiman.

The third and crowning day was reserved for Catherine de' Medici. The prize was a sword, whose hilt had been chased by Benvenuto Cellini.

At noon the band, in a balcony opposite that occupied by the princes and princesses, began to play; the hour and the tournament were come. The pages first entered the lists, like a flock of birds. There were twelve pages for each challenger, — forty-eight in all, — each dressed in silk and velvet of his master's colors. Then came four squires for each challenger; their duty was to pick up broken lances, and generally to aid the combatants according to their requirements. Then, lastly, appeared the four marshals, armed from head to foot, their visors down, mounted on horses clothed in armor like their riders, and covered with caparisons which trailed on the ground behind them. Each of these marshals, bâton in hand, took his place in front of one of the barriers, and remained perfectly still, like an equestrian statue.

Then the trumpeters of the four challengers appeared at the four sides of the pavilion, and sounded their note of

defiance to the four points of the compass. The sound of a single trumpet was heard in reply ; and a fully armed horseman, with visor down and lance at rest, was seen entering the lists by the gate of the assailants. By the collar of the Golden Fleece, which he wore, Lamoral, Count Egmont, was recognized. He had received this order in 1546 from Charles V., together with the Emperor Maximilian, Cosmo de' Medici, Grand Duke of Florence, Albert, Duke of Bavaria, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, Ottavio Farnese, Duke of Parma, and Fernando Alvarez, Duke of Alva. The plumes in his helmet were white and green, — the colors of Sabine, Countess Palatine, Duchess of Bavaria, whom he had married five years before at Spire, in presence of the Emperor Charles V. and Philip II., King of Naples, and whom he loved tenderly and faithfully till his death. He now rode forward, managing his horse with that grace which won him the reputation of being one of the first riders in the Spanish army, — a reputation so high that King Henri, who as a horseman was said to have no rival, was jealous of it. When he had ridden up to where the royal balcony was, he saluted the queen and the princesses, touching the ground with his lance, and bowing until the plume on his helmet mingled with his horse's mane ; then he struck with the reverse of his lance the shield of Henri II. Thereupon, amid the blare of trumpets, he made his horse go backward the whole length of the lists, laying his lance at rest on the other side of the barrier. As the joust was only of courtesy, the combatants in the encounter were to strike only on the body, or, to use the phrase then current, "between the four members."

Just as Count Egmont laid his lance in rest, the king appeared, fully armed and on horseback. If Henri had not been king, the applause which greeted him would

have been just as great ; it would have been quite impossible for any rider to be more gracefully or firmly seated on his horse than was the King of France. Like Count Egmont, he held his lance in readiness ; and after making his horse pirouette, as a manner of saluting the queen and the princesses, he turned toward his adversary, lance in rest. Immediately the squires lifted the barriers ; and the marshals, seeing the combatants ready, cried together, —

“ *Laissez aller !* ”

“ The two knights put spurs to their horses, and met each other in full shock ; each was struck in the chest. The king and Count Egmont were too skilful to be unhorsed ; nevertheless, the shock was so severe that the count lost a stirrup, and his lance, quivering, flew from his hand and fell several yards from him, while the king’s lance was shivered, and only the useless shaft was left in his hand. The two horses, as though terrified at the shock and at the noise of the concussion, stopped, trembling, and reared on their hind-legs.

Henri threw away the shaft of his lance ; then, while the lists echoed with the plaudits of the spectators, two squires leaped over the barriers, — one to pick up Count Egmont’s lance and hand it to him, and the other to give the king a fresh one.

The two knights returned to their posts, and again laid lance in rest. Again the trumpets sounded, the barriers were opened, and the marshals cried out a second time, —

“ *Laissez aller !* ”

This time both lances were broken ; like a tree swayed by the wind, Henri bent to his horse’s croup ; Egmont’s feet left the stirrups, and he was obliged to hold on by his saddle bow. The king recovered his equilibrium, and the count steadied himself by his saddle ; and the two

knights, whom every one expected to be unhorsed by the terrible shock, remained firm in their stirrups, though the splinters of the lances lay on the ground about them.

The squires again removed the lance-splinters, and each returned to his barrier, where he was provided with a new lance stronger than ever. Horses and riders seemed equally impatient; the former neighed, and were covered with foam: it was clear that the noble animals, aroused by the encounter and by the blare of the trumpets much more than by the spur, shared in the excitement of the combat.

The trumpets again sounded, and all the spectators shouted and clapped their hands as when, a hundred years later, Louis XIV. appeared on the stage playing the part of the Sun in the ballet of the "Four Seasons;" only, Henri as a warrior in the Middle Ages, Louis XIV. as a mere mountebank, were each the representative of their own epoch,—the first represented the France of chivalry, the second the France of gallantry. In the midst of these bravos the cry, "*Laissez aller!*" was scarcely heard. This third time the shock was even severer than before; one of Henri's feet left the stirrup under the concussion of Egmont's lance, which was shivered into splinters, while the king's lance remained intact. As for Egmont himself, he fared very badly; the shock was so severe that his horse reared, and its girth being broken slipped from its back,—the strange effect of which was that its rider found himself on the ground, though his feet were still in the stirrups. But as he landed on his feet, this fall, which could not be helped, served to exhibit his address and skill as a horseman. Nevertheless the count, saluting Henri, none the less declared himself vanquished, and courteously submitted to the mercy of his conqueror.

"Count," said the king, "you are the prisoner of the Duchesse de Valentinois. Go, then, and submit yourself to her; she, and not I, will decide as to your fate."

"Sire," replied the count, "if I had only known what sweet slavery was intended for me, I would have taken care to be conquered the first time that I encountered your Majesty."

"And it would have been a great economy in men and money for me, Monsieur le Comte," returned the king, resolved not to be defeated in courtesy; "for then I should have been spared St. Lawrence's and Gravelines."

The count withdrew; and five minutes later he knelt at the feet of Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois, who bound his hands with a splendid pearl necklace. In the mean time the king, who had run his three courses, took time to recover breath, and left the ground clear for the Duc de Guise, the second challenger. The duke ran his three courses with Count Horn, who, considering that he was tilting with one of the most skilful knights of the time, came out of the encounter with less discredit than might have been expected. In the third course, with a courtesy equal to that of Count Egmont, he confessed himself vanquished.

Then came the turn of Jacques de Nemours, who tilted with a Spaniard named Don Francisco Rigonnès. In the first shock the Spaniard lost a stirrup; in the second he was thrown over his horse's croup; in the third he was unhorsed, and fell headlong to the lists. Such was the fate of the only Spaniard who tried his luck in the tilting-field. Our neighbors beyond the Pyrenees admit their inferiority to us in struggles of this sort; and not willing further to risk their reputation, already impaired by the defeat of Don Francisco, the other Spaniards present declined.

The Duke of Ferrara alone of the challengers remained. He ran a course with Dandelot ; but although as between them Fortune showed no great favor to either, the rough defender of St. Quentin avowed in withdrawing that he preferred a real fight with naked swords, with an enemy of France, to these games, which, since his conversion to the Reformed faith, seemed rather heathenish to him. Consequently, he declared that his brother Coligny might take his place if he saw fit ; but as for him, he would run no more courses. And as Dandelot was of an obstinate nature, he kept his word.

The first day ended with a tilting-match of four challengers with four assailants, — Damville and the king, Montgomery and the Duc de Guise, the Duke of Brunswick and Jacques de Nemours, and Count Mansfeld and Alphonse d'Este. Except as regarded the king, who, either by superior skill or by his adversary's courtesy, gained a signal advantage over Damville, honors were easy. Henri re-entered his pavilion with his cup of joy filled to the brim. Of course, he did not hear what was said under their breath by the courtiers who surrounded him, — which is little to be wondered at ; kings rarely do hear what the people think. What was said was that the constable was too good a courtier not to teach his eldest son how to treat his king, even though with lance in hand.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHALLENGE.

ON the morrow King Henri was in so great a hurry to re-commence the jousts that he had dinner an hour earlier than usual, in order to be able to enter the lists precisely at noon.

While the blare of the trumpets announced the entrance of the pages, squires, and marshals, — whose manner of entrance we have endeavored to describe in the preceding chapter, — a horseman, who wore a broad-brimmed hat which hid the higher part of his face, and enveloped, notwithstanding the heat inevitable to a day in the latter end of June, in a long dark cloak, issued from the stables of the Château des Tournelles, mounted on a Barbary horse, whose speed could not be appreciated until he had got beyond the crowds of people who gathered to the festivities. But having reached the Coin des Minimes he set off at a rapid trot, which toward the Corderie des Enfants-Rouges increased to a gallop, which enabled him to cover the distance between Paris and Écouen within an hour. Arrived at the latter town, he crossed it, and did not draw rein until he reached the gate of the small isolated house, surrounded by fine trees, where we stopped when we rode to Paris with Emmanuel Philibert.

Mules loaded with baggage, a horse already saddled, which was pawing the ground in the courtyard, indicated preparations for departure. Emmanuel Philibert glanced rapidly at these preparations, which were evidence at

least that they were as yet preparations merely, fastened his horse to a ring, ascended the stairway which led to the first floor, and rushed into a room where a young lady, seated, had just listlessly fastened a dark and extremely simple travelling-dress. When the prince entered the room she raised her head, uttered a cry, and yielding to the impulse of her heart, threw herself into Emmanuel's arms.

"Leona," said he, in a tone of reproach, "what did you promise me?"

But the girl could only mutter, her lips quivering and her eyes closed, the name of Emmanuel.

The prince, still holding her in his arms, carried her back to a sort of sofa and seated himself, when she slipped half on to the ground, and lay with her head leaning on his knee.

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel," she continued to murmur, not having strength to utter anything save the beloved name.

Emmanuel Philibert gazed at her a long time in silence with an expression of unspeakable tenderness; then, when at length she re-opened her eyes, he said, —

"It is very fortunate, then, that certain words of your letter of yesterday betrayed your intention, and that a painful dream, in which I saw you in nun's attire and bathed in tears, revealed to me your design, without which you would have gone away, and I should not have seen you again before my return to Piedmont."

"Or rather, Emmanuel," murmured the girl, in a scarcely audible voice, — "or rather, you would never have seen me more."

Emmanuel turned pale, and at the same time a shudder ran through him. Leona did not see the pallor on his cheek, but she felt his body quiver.

"No, no," said she, — "no, I was wrong! Forgive me, pray forgive me, Emmanuel!"

"Remember what you promised me, Leona," said Emmanuel, as seriously as though he were reminding a friend of an engagement in which his honor was concerned, rather than recalling to his mistress a love promise. "It was at the Hôtel de Ville at Brussels. Your hand raised toward one of the holy images, and while your brother — he whose life we saved, and who unconsciously brought unhappiness to us both — was waiting at the door for the favorable reply which, in your divine devotion, you implored me to make, Leona, — you swore to be eternally mine, to leave me only on the eve before my wedding, and then — until death should release one of us from his oath — for us to meet on the 17th of November of each year at the little house in the village of Oleggio whither you, a dying child, were carried by me by the side of your dead mother. You have often said to me, 'You saved my life, Emmanuel; it is therefore yours, do with it as you choose.' Well, since your life is mine, since before the face of Christ you repeated your vow of submission, do not let us be separated until the very last moment. And that you may religiously keep your promise (without which, you know, Leona, I would have refused everything, — I am still ready to refuse all), carry yourself to the extreme of devotion, — the supreme virtue of the woman who loves; that virtue which makes of her more than angel, since to manifest their devotion angels need not sacrifice earthly passions, which we, unfortunate children of men, are compelled to do."

"Oh, Emmanuel, Emmanuel," murmured Leona, who seemed, at the sight of her lover and the sound of his voice, to return to life and happiness, "it is not devotion which I need! It is —"

Emmanuel Philibert looked inquiringly at the face which leaned against his shoulder.

"What?" he asked.

"Alas," cried Leona, "jealousy torments me! Oh, I love you, I love you, I love you so much, Emmanuel!" and the lips of the lovers met in a long kiss of happiness and love.

"Jealous," asked Emmanuel, — "you jealous? And why?"

"Oh, I am jealous no longer!" murmured the girl; "no, a love like ours is eternal! I feel, while you kiss me, that death itself cannot destroy my love, and that it will be my reward in heaven. How, then, can yours die on earth?"

"You are right, my Leona," said the prince, tenderly. "God has made an exception in my favor; in laying upon me the heavy burden of a crown, he has given me the invisible hand of one of his angels to aid me to bear it. Listen, Leona! the relations between us are in no respect like those that exist between other lovers. We shall ever live for each other, with each other, by the indissoluble union of hearts which shall brave time, and even absence. Save that that actual presence and that hourly and momentary sight of each other which we should have enjoyed will be wanting, our life will be the same. I know that it is the life of winter, without flowers, without sun, without fruit; but still it is life. The earth feels that it is not dead; and we, even we, shall feel that we love."

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel," said the girl, "you support me, you console me, you revivify me!"

"And now," said the prince, "see, let us come back again to earth, my love, and do tell me what made you jealous."

"Oh, since I left you, Emmanuel, you have been but four leagues distant, and I have seen you only twice ! "

"Thanks, dear Leona !" said Emmanuel. "But you know that great festivities are being held at the Château des Tournelles, where I reside at present ; sad festivities, indeed, for two hearts, — poor Élisabeth's and mine. Nevertheless, we each of us have to play our part — she and I — in these fêtes ; we must be at hand when we are called for, and I am liable to be summoned by the king any moment."

"But," asked Leona, "how, just in the middle of the jousts, when as judge you are most needed, have you been able to get away to see me ? "

Emmanuel smiled. "I will tell you how I contrived to get away. You are quite right in saying that I am expected to be present in the lists, — but always with closed visor. Imagine a man about my height, dressed in my armor, mounted on my horse, performing my part as marshal — "

"Ah, Scianca-Ferro !" cried the girl. "Kind Scianca-Ferro, dear Emmanuel ! "

"Then in my anxiety, rendered uneasy by the letter which I received, haunted by the dream which I had had, I have come to see my Leona, that she may renew the oath which she was on the point of forgetting. I have come to invigorate my heart in hers, my soul in hers ; and when we part we shall be strong, like that giant in the old story who had but to touch the earth to renew his strength." And the young man's lips for a second time were pressed against Leona's ; and as they kissed, both were enveloped in that cloud of flames which was wont to conceal Mars and Venus from the sight of the other gods.

Let us leave them to drain the golden chalice of their

last hours of joy, and see what had happened during this time in the lists at the Château des Tournelles.

Just as Emmanuel Philibert was leaving the palace as fast as his horse could carry him, leaving Scianca-Ferro to don his armor and perform his duties, a squire knocked at the castle-gate and asked to see Prince Emmanuel Philibert. Now, on this occasion, as we know, Emmanuel Philibert was Scianca-Ferro.

The foster-brother of Emmanuel was therefore informed that an unknown squire who wished to see the prince privately, obstinately insisted on a private interview. Scianca-Ferro was there in place of the prince ; moreover, Emmanuel had no secrets from him ; he therefore put on his helmet, — the only part of his armor which he had not donned, — and standing in the darkest part of the room, said, —

“Let him come in.”

The squire appeared at the door of the apartment ; he was attired in a dark-colored garment, and bore neither armorial bearings nor any device by which he might be recognized.

“Have I the honor of addressing his Highness Prince Emmanuel Philibert ? ”

“You see,” said Scianca-Ferro, — by these two words eluding a positive reply.

“I bring a letter from my master. He expects either an acceptance or a direct refusal.”

Scianca-Ferro took the letter, broke the seal, and read the following : —

A man who has sworn the death of Prince Emmanuel Philibert makes this proposition, that in the tournament which is to be held to-day, the prince and he should engage in a combat to the death, with lance, sword, battle-axe, mace, and poniard, — he, for his part, disclaiming beforehand all appeal

to mercy, and that the prince should do likewise if this man be victor.

Prince Emmanuel Philibert has the reputation of being a brave soldier : if he is not unworthy of his reputation, he will accept this challenge, and will charge himself with obtaining for the victor every guarantee from King Henri II.

A MORTAL ENEMY.

Scianca-Ferro read the letter without manifesting any uneasiness, and turning to the squire, replied, —

“Tell your master that everything shall be as he desires, and that as soon as the king has run his courses he has only to present himself in the lists and touch with the reverse of his lance Prince Emmanuel’s shield. He will find it at the right of the pavilion, in the quadrilateral, hanging next to that of the constable, and opposite that of Monsieur de Vieilleville. I will engage beforehand that every guarantee shall be accorded him by the king.”

“My master sends a written challenge,” said the squire, “and desires a written guarantee.”

At this moment Monsieur de Vieilleville appeared at the entrance to the pavilion ; he came to inquire if Emmanuel Philibert was ready.

Scianca-Ferro lowered the visor of his helmet, and approaching the grand chamberlain, said, —

“Monsieur de Vieilleville, have the kindness to go for me and beg his Majesty to write the word ‘granted’ at the foot of this letter. I pray the king not to refuse me this favor, as my honor is at stake.”

Scianca-Ferro was completely clad in the duke’s armor, and his closed visor prevented his auditors from seeing his light hair, blue eyes, and brown beard ; Monsieur de Vieilleville therefore bowed before him whom he thought was the prince, and as the time for the tourney was at

hand, he hastened to fulfil the commission with which he was charged.

Five minutes later he brought back the letter. The word "granted" was written at the bottom, followed by the royal signature. Scianca-Ferro, without adding a word, gave the letter to the squire, who bowed and withdrew.

The supposed prince did not delay ; he went back only to get his sword and mace, and as he passed by his armorer he directed him to sharpen three lances. Then he took his place at the barrier, — that which the prince occupied on the day before.

The king ran his three courses the first, breaking lances with the Duke of Brunswick, Count Horn, and Count Mansfeld. Afterward came the turn of the Duc de Guise, Jacques de Nemours, and the Duke of Ferrara.

All these tourneys were marvels of strength and skill ; but it was evident that the illustrious assembly was filled with expectation of some great event. This great event was the single combat authorized by the king. Henri had not had the courage to keep the secret to himself ; without saying who the combatants were, he announced that there would be a fight. Every one knew, then, that in all probability before sundown blood would redden the arena prepared for the fête. The women shuddered at the idea of a fight with naked weapons ; but while they shuddered they in all likelihood anticipated more impatiently than the men the time when the excitement should be the keenest. The general curiosity was increased by the fact that no one knew who had been challenged. Moreover, the king had left it in doubt whether the fight was to take place on the second or third day of the fêtes, — on that day or the next.

After the tilt with the Duke of Ferrara, there was to

be, as on the previous day, a general tournament. The trumpets gave the signal for this ; but instead of the four trumpets of the four challengers answering together, a single blast was heard, followed by a foreign air, its notes sharp and full of menace. A flutter of excitement ran through the spectators ; a murmur, partly of satisfied expectation, partly of fear, rose from the balconies, and the heads of the crowd swayed like a field of corn before the wind.

Two persons alone in all that vast assembly knew for whom that trumpet sounded, — the king and Scianca-Ferro, who, for the king as for every one else, was no other than Emmanuel Philibert.

The king looked from the pavilion, to see if the duke was at his post, whereupon Scianca-Ferro, who guessed his intention, lightly bowed to his horse's neck.

“Courage, brother-in-law !” said the king.

Scianca-Ferro smiled behind his visor, just as though his face could have been seen, and raised his head, shaking the plumes in his helmet. At that moment all eyes were turned to the pavilion of the assailants. A knight, completely armed, leaped the barrier and entered the lists.

CHAPTER XII.

A FIGHT WITH SHARPENED STEEL.

THIS knight bore a lance with sharpened head ; a sword hung at one side of his saddle-bow, and a battle-axe at the other. Behind him rode his squire, with two lances exactly like that of his master. The suit of armor which the knight wore was entirely black, even to the plumes of the helmet ; and he rode a black horse, whose trappings also were black. As a contrast, the blade of his battle-axe and the sharpened point of his lance shone with a sinister gleam. As there was neither device nor armorial bearing on his shield, it was quite impossible to tell of what nationality he was, or to what class he belonged. The gold chain which he wore round his neck and his gold spurs indicated, however, that he had been dubbed knight. At the sight of this gloomy figure, which seemed as though sent by Death himself, every one present, with one exception, felt a shudder run through him.

The Black Knight slowly drew near the two tiers in the lists, bowed to the queens and princesses, made his horse pirouette, and again passed the barrier, which closed behind him. Then he called his squire, who laid on the ground the two lances which he held, — in the event of the first being broken, — took his lord's lance from his hand, opened the cross barrier which stopped the way to the quadrilateral, and going up to Duke Emmanuel Philibert's pavilion, he touched with the point of the

lance, the shield blazoned with the arms of Savoy and surrounded by the duke's own motto: *Spoliatis arma supersunt*. The shield gave forth a mournful sound when struck by the steel.

"Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, my master, in presence of the King of France, the princes, these noble peers and barons here gathered together, in the presence of these queens, princesses, and noble ladies who hear and see us, challenges thee to a fight to the death, in which neither pity nor mercy shall be shown, taking God to witness the justice of his cause, and all persons here present as judges as to the manner in which he bears himself. May God and victory be for the right!"

A feeble cry answered this defiance, — a cry which escaped the pale lips of Madame Marguerite de France, almost ready to faint, which was followed by a profound silence, broken at length by these words, which every one regarded as spoken by Emmanuel Philibert, —

"Be it so. Tell thy master that I accept the combat under the conditions which he has laid down, with God as judge, and the king, the princes, peers, and barons, the queens, princesses, and noble ladies here present as witnesses; that I disclaim all mercy from him, as he disclaims all mercy for me. And now may God decide on which side the right is." Then, with a voice as calm as though he were asking for his marshal's baton, he said, "My lance!"

A squire approached with three lances, whose sharpened heads glittered in the sun's rays. Scianca-Ferro took the first that came, urged his horse forward at the same time with both hand and spurs, and leaped the cross-barrier into the lists. Behind him appeared in the quadrilateral a horseman completely armed, who took the same position which he had left. This was the king

in person, who was about to honor the combatants by being umpire.

From the time of the entrance of the Black Knight into the lists, during the delivery of the challenge, and while the response was given, there was a profound silence. Some shouts of applause, however, were heard in admiration of the lightness and dexterity with which the knight had made his horse leap the barrier, encumbered as was the noble animal by his *chanfron* and the armor of his rider; but these shouts of applause almost immediately ceased, as in a church or a funeral vault, when one unconsciously raises one's voice, one suddenly remembers the sanctity of the place and forthwith speaks in a whisper.

During this time the two adversaries eyed each other critically from behind their closed visors, and grasped their lances firmer. Then the squires raised the barriers, and the king uttered the words, "*Laissez aller!*" The three marshals seemed silently to have conceded the king this right, as though it were the prerogative of a king alone to give the signal for a struggle in which one of the combatants might fall.

Scarcely was the cry, "*Laissez aller!*" heard, when the two adversaries rushed one against the other, and encountered in the middle of the lists. Each took a different aim,—the Black Knight directed his lance against his opponent's visor, while the latter struck full on the breast-plate. It was not till some seconds after the shock that the bystanders could judge as to the respective success of the combatants. The Black Knight had broken the ducal coronet from Emmanuel Philibert's helmet, while the lance of him who was fighting in his armor and under his name broke in three pieces against the steel cuirass of his adversary. The shock was so violent that the Black Knight, hurled back on his horse's croup, lost a stirrup;

but in a moment he recovered it, and raised himself by his saddle-bow. Each of the combatants turned and rode back to the starting-place, and Scianca-Ferro's squire provided his master with a fresh lance in place of the broken one. The Black Knight also took a fresh lance, as the point of the one he had just used had been blunted against the duke's crest.

No cry of applause, no bravo, greeted this encounter; all felt that a veritable terror hovered over the concourse. Indeed, from the relentlessness of the late encounter, it appeared unmistakably this time that the combat was real, and, as the Black Knight had said, to the death, in which neither pity nor mercy was to be shown.

The lances chosen and laid at rest, and the horses pawing impatiently, the king a second time uttered the words, "*Laissez aller!*" Again the sound like the distant roll of thunder was heard; then the shock, like a sudden clap, and the two horses reared. This time both lances were broken; only, the cuirass of the duke showed where the Black Knight's lance had struck, while the lance-head of Scianca-Ferro was buried in his adversary's breastplate. For a moment every one believed that the Black Knight was seriously wounded; but it was not so. The steel, in passing through the armor, had been stopped by a coat of mail worn underneath. The Black Knight grasped the lance-head with both hands, and tried to pull it out; but the threefold effort which he made was of no avail, and he was compelled to have recourse to his squire, who succeeded, after the second attempt, in dragging it forth.

As yet nothing decisive had been accomplished; nevertheless, it was generally felt that the advantage, if any, was with the Duke of Savoy. The queens began to feel more sure; the interest in this terrible game enthralled them in spite of themselves. At each course Madame

Marguerite alone averted her gaze, and would not look until she heard these words, uttered in her ear by the young princesses and the dauphin, —

“Look! do look!”

The king's cup of joy was filled to the brim; he was assisting in a real combat. He scarcely thought that all risk is necessarily uncertain, and that his sister might become a widow before being a duchess; but from the way in which he spoke to Scianca-Ferro, it might be supposed that he had no fear in regard to the result of the fight. He cried, —

“Courage, brother-in-law! Victory to the gules shield and the silver cross!”

Meantime, each combatant took a third lance and got ready for the third course. The king scarcely gave them time to put their weapons in rest before, for the third time, he said, —

“Laissez aller!”

On this occasion the horse of the Black Knight was hurled backward, and Scianca-Ferro himself, losing his stirrups, was compelled to grasp his saddle-bow; but with wonderful skill, with one hand he unhooked his mace, and with the other drew his sword, — and so adroitly that one would have thought he was only substituting another weapon for the one which had just been broken. On the other hand, the Black Knight had scarcely touched the ground, when with a bound he avoided his struggling horse and alighted on his feet; and with dexterity equal to that shown by his adversary, he drew his sword from its sheath, and took the battle-axe from its hook. Each of the combatants then made a step backward, in order to have time to hang his axe at his belt; then, this weapon within reach of the hand, as a last reserve, the adversaries, leaving to their squires the care of leading the horses

away, and of picking up the lance-splinters which lay about on the field, rushed at each other with as much ardor as though the combat had but just begun.

If the silence had been great, if profound attention had been paid to the combat during the three courses, the interest was intensified when the sword-play began, in which every one knew Emmanuel Philibert was a master. No one was surprised, then, at the strength and violence of the blows which began to rain on the Black Knight; but what did surprise the spectators was the skill and readiness with which they were parried. Swiftly as the attack had been given, the defence was equally swift; there was an equal exchange of blows,—a terrible exchange, in which the weapons seemed flaming swords. No eye, however skilled in this death-game, could follow them; it was only from the sparks that flew from shield, helmet, or cuirass, that one knew where each blow had fallen.

At length Scianca-Ferro dealt his adversary's head so severe a blow that, finely tempered as was the helmet, it would have been cloven had not the Black Knight interposed his shield; but the terrible blade cut the shield in twain as though it had been leather, and even then made a deep gash in the brassart. Encumbered by a cloven shield, the Black Knight stepped backward, threw the two halves of his shield away, and grasping his sword with both hands struck the duke's shield so furiously with it that the sword flew into twenty pieces, leaving the hilt alone in his hands. Then Scianca-Ferro might have been heard to utter a cry of joy from behind his closed visor; the shorter and heavier the weapon, the greater his advantage over his adversary. The Black Knight threw away his sword-hilt and unhooked his battle-axe; immediately Scianca-Ferro, in his turn, discarded lance and sword, and like a flash of gold was seen whirling in the

air that faithful mace which had given him his name. From that moment there was but one cry of admiration in the lists, from the galleries, and from the balconies. No comparison could give an idea of the rapidity and violence of the blows delivered. Each of the combatants being without shield, there was no longer any question of skill; nothing but brute strength was now of avail. Struck as the anvil is by the hammer, so the Black Knight at first stood as immovable as it, and almost as insensible; but each blow was followed by another so heavy that at length he began to recoil. Then his adversary also drew back; the terrible mace turned in his hand as though it were a leaf, with a hissing sound flew forth, and struck the knight full in the visor. At this blow the latter opened his arms, and steadied himself a moment like a tree which totters to its fall; but before he could reach the ground, with a single bound like that of a tiger, Scianca-Ferro was upon him, his sharp poniard in his hand. The sound of grinding steel was heard, then a cry from all the women: "Quarter, Duke of Savoy! Duke Emmanuel, mercy!" But Scianca-Ferro, shaking his head, replied: "No, no quarter for the traitor! No mercy for the murderer!" and through the bars of the visor, through the breaks in his cuirass, through the openings in his gorget, he sought a way for his poniard, — when suddenly the words, "Stop! by the living God, stop!" drew the attention of all to a horseman who rode headlong into the lists, and who, rapidly dismounting, seized the victor round the waist, and lifting him with superhuman strength threw him ten paces from the vanquished. Then to the cry of terror which had just been heard, succeeded a cry of surprise; the horseman who had ridden so hurriedly into the lists was none other than the Duke of Savoy himself, Emmanuel Philibert.

"Scianca-Ferro, Scianca-Ferro," cried the duke to his squire, who was red with anger, "what have you done? You know well that to me the life of this man is sacred, and that I will that he should not die!"

"Sacred or not," replied Scianca-Ferro, "I swear to you, Emmanuel, by my mother's soul, that he shall not die save by my hand!"

"Fortunately," said Emmanuel, unloosing the vanquished man's helmet, "it will not be this time!"

And indeed, although the face of the Black Knight was covered with blood, he had only fainted; he had received no serious wound, and in all likelihood the doctor would soon bring him to.

"Gentlemen," said Emmanuel Philibert to Messieurs de Vieilleville and De Boissy, "you are the marshals; I place this man under the safeguard of your honor. On his recovery let him be free to withdraw without giving his name, or being compelled to divulge the grounds of his hatred. It is my desire, — nay, my prayer; and if necessary I will crave this favor from his Majesty, so that it may be also the king's command."

The squires then lifted the wounded man in their arms and bore him from the field.

In the mean time Scianca-Ferro unclasped his helmet, from which the crown and crest had been shorn, and angrily threw it on the ground. It was only then that the king appeared convinced.

"What, brother," said he, "is it indeed not you?"

"No, Sire," replied Emmanuel Philibert, "but, as you see, a man who is worthy of the armor he wears!" and he opened his arms to Scianca-Ferro, who, growling like a bull-dog who has been compelled to let go, but who nevertheless obeys his master, heartily embraced his foster-brother.

Then the shouts of applause, which had hitherto been restrained by terror or astonishment, burst from all sides of the enclosure with force enough to shake the buildings ; the women waved their handkerchiefs, the princesses their scarfs, and Marguerite showed the beautiful battle-axe which was to be the prize of the victor. But all this did not console Scianca-Ferro for the fact that Waldeck's bastard had escaped alive for the second time from his hands ; so that as he went up to the royal daïs, led by the king and Emmanuel Philibert, to receive the battle-axe from the hands of Marguerite de Valois, he muttered, —

“Let the serpent fall into my hands a third time, Brother Emmanuel, and I swear to you that that time he shall not escape alive !”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PREDICTION.

THE incident which happened at the tournament of the 29th of June remained a mystery, not only for the mass of the spectators, but even for those whose social position would seem to insure a knowledge of court secrets. How did it happen that the Duke of Savoy, who ought to have been present, was away? How came it that his foster-brother, Scianca-Ferro, was dressed in his armor, and that just at that moment his double, his friend, his brother, should have had to fight so terrible a battle in his place? All the questions asked on this subject were in vain; and as the king himself seemed to desire to be initiated into the mystery, Emmanuel begged him, smiling, not to try to lift the veil which concealed this corner of his life.

Madame Marguerite alone, with that anxious curiosity which is pardoned to faithful love, would have had the right to question him; but she had been in such terror during the combat, and had been so happy to see her dear duke again safe and sound, that she asked nothing more, and the sole new sentiment which rose in her heart was an increase of fraternal affection for Scianca-Ferro.

Emmanuel asked three times for news of the wounded man. On the first occasion he was informed that the patient had fainted; the second that he had come to; the third that he was on horseback. All reply which the bastard vouchsafed to the prince's inquiries was this, in the form of a menace, —

"Tell Duke Emmanuel that we shall meet again!"

Then, unrecognized by every one, he had departed, accompanied by his unknown squire. It was evident that he was ignorant of the fact that he had fought with Scianca-Ferro, and not with the duke.

This exciting episode did but give new ardor to the enjoyments of the evening; so that Henri said to the ladies, who with their usual enthusiasm were discussing the incident, —

"What shall I offer you to-morrow, and what spectacle will be worthy of your beautiful eyes after what you have seen to-day?"

Poor king! he did not know that the morrow's spectacle would be so terrible that it would put the incident of the previous day entirely into the shade. Moreover, there was no lack of omens. Toward eight o'clock in the morning one of the ladies in waiting of Catherine de' Medici repaired to the king's apartments, announcing that she came in the queen's name, humbly begging him to receive her Majesty.

"What, receive her?" said the king. "On the contrary, I will go to her myself, and this very moment. Is she not my queen and my lady-love?"

This reply was of course reported to Catherine, who, however, shook her head. She possessed little of the power of a queen, and had even less claim to be called the king's lady-love. The real queen and lady was the Duchesse de Valentinois.

When the king entered Catherine's apartments he was frightened to see how pale she was.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" he exclaimed, "what is the matter? Are you sick, and have you had a bad night?"

"Yes, my dear lord," replied Catherine, "I am sick, but it is with fear."

"Oh, *bon Dieu!* and what are you afraid of?"

"The incident which occurred yesterday has much disturbed me, reminding me of my old fears. You remember, Sire, the prediction made at your birth?"

"Ah, yes," said Henri, "wait! Is there not a horoscope that threatens me?"

"Exactly, Sire!"

"Intimating that I am to die in a duel or a single combat?"

"Well, Sire?"

"Well, you see the horoscope has made a mistake: the person threatened is not I, but my brother-in-law, Emmanuel. But, thanks to Heaven, he has escaped! It is true I can't tell in what manner, and I do not understand how it chanced that his squire — that very demon who is rightly called Iron-Breaker — appeared there in the nick of time in his armor, to fight in his stead, with the Black Knight."

"My lord," replied the queen, "it was not your brother-in-law who was threatened, it was you. The stars promise him a long and fortunate career; while you, on the contrary —" Catherine stopped, trembling.

"Dear lady," said Henri, "I pay very little attention to predictions, nativities, or horoscopes; but I have always heard it said that from the prophecy told of the ancient King Œdipus at his birth to that made in regard to King Louis XII. on the day of his marriage with Anne of Brittany, all precautions were useless, and that what was to happen did happen. Let us trust then in the goodness of God and in the intercession of our guardian angel, and let things take their course."

"Sire," said Catherine, "could you not refrain from engaging in any combat for to-day?"

"What, Madame!" cried Henri, "not engage to-day?"

But you are evidently unaware that to-day I have determined to try conclusions with my three companions of the tournament, — Monsieur de Guise, Monsieur de Nemours, and Monsieur de Ferrare. I have discovered an ingenious way to avoid leaving the lists ; and since it is probably the last tournament which we shall have, I hope to enjoy it to the full."

"Sire," said Catherine, "you are of course master ; but to go in direct opposition to the warnings of the stars is to tempt Providence, for the stars are the letters of the celestial alphabet."

"Madame," Henri replied, "I am extremely grateful to you for the anxiety that you manifest ; but unless you can give me warning of positive grounds of real danger, I shall in no respect change the day's programme."

"Sire," said Catherine, "there is, unfortunately, nothing positive but my fears, nothing real but my anxiety ; and I would give a great deal if some one who has greater influence over you than I have would ask of you the favor which you have just refused me."

"No one has more influence over me than you have, Madame," Henri replied with dignity ; "and pray believe this, — what I do not grant to the mother of my children I shall grant to no one." Then kissing her hand, which, it must be borne in mind, was the most beautiful in the world, he added, "And now, Madame, do not forget, I beg you, that to-day you are queen of the lists, and that I shall do what in me lies to be crowned by your hand."

Catherine sighed deeply ; then she said, as if, having done her duty, she had determined to leave the rest with God, —

"Well, Sire, let us say no more about it ; it may be, after all, another prince whose life is threatened. But indeed I should fear a real duel less than this pretence

of a combat ; for the prediction is positive, and it is in a tourney or a joust where the danger is to be found : *Quem Mars non rapuit, Martis imago rapuit*, — ‘ He whom Mars spares is slain by the image of Mars.’ ”

But Henri was already too far away to hear the text of the prophecy which Catherine had uttered below her breath.

Whether from anxiety or some other motive, Catherine was not present at dinner, though she was one of the first to be seated on the royal balcony. It was afterward remarked that she had on a violet velvet dress, slashed with white satin, — which is court mourning.

When the time arrived for the king to put on his armor, he called on the grand chamberlain, Monsieur de Vieilleville, to render him this service. Singular to relate, the *grand écuyer*, Monsieur de Boissy, was not at his post, — of which fact Monsieur de Vieilleville informed the king.

“ Well, since you are here, Vieilleville,” said the king, “ the damage is not irreparable ; you shall help me put on my armor.”

Monsieur de Vieilleville obeyed ; but when nothing remained but to put on the king’s helmet, the grand chamberlain’s courage failed him, and with a deep sigh he said, —

“ God is my witness, Sire, that I never did anything in my life more reluctantly than the task I have just finished.”

“ And why, my old friend ? ” asked the king.

“ Because,” said Monsieur de Vieilleville, “ for more than three nights I have done nothing but dream that some misfortune is about to happen to you to-day, and that this last of June will be fatal to you.”

“ Nonsense ! ” said the king ; “ I know all about it, and where it came from.”

"I do not understand you, Sire."

"Why, you have seen Queen Catherine this morning."

"Sire, I have had the honor of seeing the queen, — not this morning, however; it was yesterday."

"And she has imparted to you all her silly notions, has n't she?"

"Sire, it is three days since the queen did me the honor to speak with me; and what she then said had not the remotest relation to the fear which I have just represented to your Majesty that I entertain. Moreover," continued the grand chamberlain, a little piqued that the king should think that on this occasion he was only the mouth-piece of another, "the king is master; he will do what he pleases."

"See here," returned the king, "shall I tell you why you are afraid? Because I have only promised that you shall be a marshal, and the patent is not yet signed. But don't be uneasy, Vieilleville; unless I am instantly killed dead you shall have your patent. If I am not able to sign my whole name to it, I will put my initial, and that will do as well."

"Since your Majesty takes it that way," replied Vieilleville, "I can only ask your pardon for what I have dared to say to you. But if any misfortune should happen to your Majesty, be assured that it would not be the loss of the patent that I should regret, but the misfortune." And he placed the helmet on the king's head.

At this moment Admiral Coligny came in. He was completely armed, with the exception of his helmet, which a page behind him was carrying.

"Pardon me, Sire," said he, "but I fear that there has been some change in this last day's programme: it is said that the tournament is to end in a *mêlée*. I wish to know if the report is true, for in the event of the pro-

posed *mêlée* taking place, I should like to confer with your Majesty on the subject."

"No," the king replied, "there is to be no *mêlée*. But do tell me what you would have told me, my dear Admiral, if I had said there was to be a *mêlée*."

"Sire," returned Coligny, "your Majesty will pardon a question which, I swear, is not dictated by mere curiosity. With whom does your Majesty intend to tilt?"

"Oh, my dear Admiral, that is no secret, and you must be deeply plunged in your theological questions indeed not to know that! I tilt first with Monsieur de Guise, then with Monsieur de Nemours, then, lastly, with Monsieur de Ferrare."

"And your Majesty will tilt with no one else?"

"No, — at least, I think not."

The admiral bowed. "Then," said he, "will your Majesty permit me to assure you that I am quite satisfied with what you have just told me; that is all that I wished to know."

"Well, my dear Admiral," said the king, smiling, "very little, truly, is requisite for your happiness." Then turning to Vieilleville, "Come," said he, "Vieilleville, let the trumpets be sounded; I fear we are late."

The trumpets sounded, and the tournament began.

As the king had said, the first match was between him and Monsieur de Guise; it was superbly played. The two knights displayed in it all their skill; nevertheless, in the third encounter the king struck with such violence that Monsieur de Guise lost both stirrups, and was compelled to grasp his saddle-bow to save himself from falling, and the honor of the course remained with the king, though several of the spectators claimed that Monsieur de Guise was not to blame for the failure, but his horse, which was *rebours*, that is to say, restive.

After these three courses were run, the turn of Jacques de Savoie came. The king had his horse's girths carefully looked to, and chose his lance with extreme care. We have already informed the reader how great was the reputation of Monsieur de Nemours for skill and strength in this warrior's pastime; and on this occasion he sustained his reputation. But the king did not lose his. At the third encounter the duke's horse stumbled and fell; and though, nevertheless, the horse recovered himself and his rider did not lose his seat, the umpires declared the king victor.

At length the trumpets gave the signal for the third tilting-match. This, as we have said, was to be between the king and the Duke of Ferrara. Although expert in this game, Alphonso d'Este, who was to ruin his duchy in fêtes, tournaments, and revels, was not an adversary who gave Henri any anxiety; and Queen Catherine, who followed the tournament with intense anxiety, began to feel more at ease. The stars had told her that, the 30th of June once passed, there would be nothing more to fear for her husband, and that if this last day of the month should pass without accident, Henri would reign long and happily over France.

The trumpets again sounded, and the king and the duke ran their three courses. In the last the duke lost both stirrups, while the king remained motionless; therefore the king was declared victor.

But Henri was not satisfied. It was not yet four o'clock in the afternoon; he was intoxicated with the popular applause, and unwilling to leave the lists.

"Ah! *mordieu*," said he, as the marshals called out that the jousts were at an end, "this is being conqueror too easily." And seeing Montgomery, who, completely armed with the exception of his helmet, was leaning against

the pavilion of the challengers, he cried out to him : "Ho, Montgomery ! Monsieur de Guise told me that in the tilt you had with him the other day you made him lose both stirrups, and that he never saw a steadier rider than you. Now, while I go and get a glass of wine, put your helmet on and let us break a lance together for the honor of our ladies."

"Sire," said Montgomery, "I would accept with the greatest pleasure the honor which your Majesty deigns to grant me, but there are no more lances this side ; they seem all to have been used."

"If there are no lances on your side, Montgomery," the king replied, "there are plenty on mine, and I will send you three, so that you may choose from them." And turning to his squire, he said, "Hola ! France, three lances, and of the best, for Monsieur de Montgomery !" Then he dismounted, re-entered his pavilion, had his casque raised, and called for wine.

At this moment, and while he had the cup in his hand, Emmanuel Philibert came in.

"A cup for Monsieur de Savoie !" said the king ; "I want him to drink with me, — he to the health of Madame Marguerite, and I to that of my lady."

"Sire," said Emmanuel, "I would ask nothing better than to pledge you ; but first of all, let me deliver my message."

"Well," said the king, quite intoxicated with pleasure, "say on ; I am listening."

"I have come in Queen Catherine's name, Sire, to beg you not to tilt again. Everything has ended happily, and her Majesty ardently desires that you will not tempt fortune further."

"Bah !" said the king ; "have you not heard, brother-in-law, that I have challenged Monsieur de Montgomery,

and have sent him lances to choose from? Tell the queen that I will run this course for love of her, and that this shall be the very last."

"Sire —" the duke was about to continue.

"A cup, a cup of wine for Monsieur de Savoie! And for the health which he shall bring to my sister I will give him back the marquise of Saluces. But in God's name do not prevent me breaking this last lance!"

"But you shall not break it, Sire!" said a second voice behind Henri.

The king turned, and recognized the constable.

"Ah! is it you, old bear? What business have you here, — unless you are thirsty? Your place is in the lists."

"The king is mistaken," said Montmorency. "My place was in the lists as long as the lists were open; but the lists are closed, and I am no longer marshal."

"Closed?" said the king. "By no means; I have still a lance to break."

"Sire, Queen Catherine —"

"Ah! you too have come from her, — you!"

"Sire, she implores you —"

"A cup, a cup of wine for the constable," interrupted the king.

The constable grumblingly took the cup.

"Sire," he said, "after the peace which I have just negotiated, I thought I was an envoy of some skill; but your Majesty shows me that I have too high an opinion of myself, and that I shall have to go back to school."

"Come, Duke," said the king, "come, Constable, let us drink, each to his lady, — you, my brother-in-law, to Marguerite, the pearl of pearls; you, Constable, to Madame de Valentinois, the supreme beauty; and I to Queen Catherine — Duke, and you, Constable, tell her that

I have drunk this cup to her health, and that I shall break this last lance in her honor."

It was of no use to struggle against such obstinacy ; therefore the two envoys bowed and withdrew.

"Come, come, Vieilleville," cried Henri, "my helmet !"

But instead of Vieilleville, Coligny entered the pavilion.

"Sire," said he, "it is I again. I trust your Majesty will pardon me."

"Why, certainly I pardon you, Admiral ! And since you are here, do me the kindness to fasten my helmet."

"Sire, a word first —"

"No, my dear Admiral, if you please, no. Afterward."

"It will be too late afterward, Sire, for what I have to tell you."

"Tell me, then, what you want to say, and as quickly as possible."

"Sire, you will not tilt with Monsieur de Montgomery."

"Ah, you too !" cried the king. "You as a heretic, my friend, ought not to be superstitious. That sort of thing is good enough for the queen, who is a Catholic, and moreover a Florentine."

"Sire, listen to me," returned Coligny, gravely. "What I have to say to you is especially serious as being the counsel of a great emperor who is now dead."

"Ah ! is it a piece of advice of Charles V., which you forgot to give me when you came from Brussels ?"

"Your Majesty mistakes ; I gave you that counsel, though indirectly, when I urged you to send Monsieur de Montgomery to Scotland."

"Ah, true ! the advice did come from you. Well, he has been, and he did me good service there."

"I am aware of it, Sire ; but perhaps your Majesty does not know why I advised you to send Monsieur de Montgomery to Scotland."

"Indeed, I do not know !"

"Well, because his late Majesty Charles V. learned from his astrologer that Monsieur de Montgomery has between the eyes a mark which indicates that he will one day do deadly injury to a prince of the fleur-de-lis."

"Bah !"

"The august Emperor Charles V. charged me to warn your Majesty of this horoscope ; but as I regarded Monsieur de Montgomery as one of your most devoted servants ; as I felt sure that if he should work harm to a prince of the fleur-de-lis it would be involuntarily ; as I feared lest I should injure him in your Majesty's estimation by informing you of this prophecy, — I have hitherto contented myself with advising you to send the captain of your Scottish guard to the help of the Queen-regent of Scotland. Even to-day, Sire, when I believed that there was to be a *mêlée*, I came to inquire of your Majesty in order, if this *mêlée* should take place, to get Monsieur de Montgomery out of the way, or to take care, as I did the last time, that he should not meet your Majesty. There has been no *mêlée* ; so I had nothing to do, nothing to say. But now, when by a species of fatality, the jousts being at an end, your Majesty has just challenged Monsieur de Montgomery, I address you, Sire, and in the hope of preventing this tilting-match, I say to you : Sire, that which I have the honor to repeat to your Majesty in regard to the Comte de Lorges I learned from the Emperor Charles V. himself. Sire, in Heaven's name do not tilt with Monsieur de Montgomery ! Monsieur de Montgomery must be fatal to a prince of the fleur-de-lis ; and of all the princes of the fleur-de-lis, your Majesty is the greatest."

Henri hesitated for a moment ; then, laying his hand on Coligny's shoulder, he replied, —

"Admiral, if you had told me this morning what you tell me now, I think I should not have challenged Monsieur de Montgomery ; but now that the challenge has been given, it would seem as though I drew back from fear. Now, God is my witness that I fear nothing in the world. I do not thank you the less, Monsieur l'Amiral ; but now, even though misfortune should result from it, it is too late, I shall break this lance."

"Sire," said one of the squires, entering the pavilion as the king concluded, "Monsieur de Montgomery is ready, and awaits the king's good pleasure."

"That is good, my friend ; the king's good pleasure is that you fasten my helmet, and that the trumpets do sound."

Only half of the king's command was executed : the squire fastened the royal helmet ; but the musicians, supposing that the jousts were at an end, had left the balcony which served them for a platform. Their departure was reported to the king ; at the same time he was told that there would be no difficulty in recalling them, but that it would take about a quarter of an hour to get them all in their places again.

"Never mind," said the king ; "that would be too long to wait. We will run this course without any flourish of trumpets ; that's all."

Then he mounted his horse and left the pavilion, crying out, "Ho, Monsieur de Montgomery, are you ready ?"

"Yes, Sire," the count replied, in his turn leaving the opposite pavilion.

"Gentlemen," said the king to the marshals, "you see that we are waiting only for the word."

"Laissez aller !" said Monsieur de Savoie and the constable ; and in deep and sad silence the two knights rushed forward and met in the middle of the lists, their lances breaking in the shock.

Suddenly, to the great astonishment of the spectators, the king's feet were seen to leave the stirrups, and he threw his arms round his horse's neck, letting the bridle fall, while the horse came to a stop, at the same time that Montgomery, as though struck dumb with fright, threw down the handle of the lance which still remained in his hand. At the same time Messieurs de Vieilleville and de Boissy, who rightly suspected, from the posture of the king, that something unusual had happened, leaped the barrier and seized the horse by the bit, crying out, —

“For the love of God, Sire, what has happened?”

“You were quite right,” stammered the king, “my dear Vieilleville, in opposing this accursed course!”

“Are you then wounded, Sire?” the grand chamberlain anxiously asked of the king.

“I believe that I am killed,” murmured the king, in so weak a voice that the attendants could scarcely hear him.

Indeed, the splinter of Montgomery's lance, glancing from the king's armor, had forced up his visor, and a fragment of wood, piercing his eye, had penetrated the brain.

Then, collecting all his strength in a last cry, the king said, —

“Monsieur de Montgomery must not be molested; he is not to blame.”

A long outcry of fear rose from the ranks of the spectators, who fled tumultuously, as though a thunderbolt had fallen in the midst of them, each following his own direction, and shouting on the way, —

“The king is dead! The king is dead!”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DEATHBED.

MEANWHILE Messieurs de Boissy and de Vieilleville bore the king into his bedchamber, and without taking off his armor laid him on the bed. They could not remove his helmet, the splinter being still in the wound, and sticking out two or three inches.

The surgeons who were present in the lists flocked to the palace. Though there were five of them, no one dared to take the responsibility of removing the lance-splinter from the wound ; and although Queen Catherine, the dauphin, and the princesses — who alone had been admitted to the royal bedchamber — implored them to relieve the sufferer, looking one at the other and shaking their heads, they said, —

“ Let some one as quickly as possible fetch Maître Ambroise Paré ; for without him we dare not attempt to do anything.”

“ Let some one find Maître Ambroise Paré, wherever he may be,” said the queen ; and the same moment servants, pages, and squires rushed in all directions inquiring, wherever there was prospect of success, as to the whereabouts of the illustrious surgeon.

Indeed, Maître Ambroise Paré was at this period at the height of his fame. After following René de Montejean, colonel of the foot-guards, to Italy, he returned to France, took his degree at the College of St. Edme, was appointed provost of the Society of Surgeons, and for the last seven

years had been attached to the person of the king as surgeon-in-chief. He was discovered in the garret of a poor thatcher, who, falling from a roof, had just broken his leg.

The arrival at the palace of the renowned surgeon was announced by cries of "Here is Maître Ambroise ! Here he is ! here he is !" Then a man of about forty-five or six, of grave bearing and with dreamy eye, and who slightly stooped, appeared at the door. The moment he was seen every one made way for him, and he drew near to the bed.

"See, Maître !" said the doctors ; and the eyes of all present were fixed on him whom all regarded as the only man in France capable of saving the king's life if it could be saved.

We say "in France" designedly ; for beyond the borders of France there was a man whose reputation was higher than that of Ambroise Paré, and whom Paré delighted in calling "master." This man was Andrew Vesalius, surgeon to King Philip II. of Spain.

The eyes of every one in the room, directed toward Ambroise Paré, asked more eloquently than words could have done, what grounds of hope or fear there were. But it was impossible to read anything on his impassive face ; only a keen observer might have noticed that at sight of the wound the illustrious surgeon turned slightly pale.

"Oh, Maître Ambroise," cried Catherine de' Medici, "do not forget that it is the King of France whom I intrust to your care !"

Ambroise Paré's arm was already stretched toward Henri ; but he let it fall.

"Madame," said he, "in the state in which I find your august consort, the real King of France is not he, but his successor. I crave permission to treat him as I would

treat the humblest soldier in the army; it is the only chance that I have to save him."

"There is, then, a chance, Maître Ambroise?" the queen asked.

"I do not say so, Madame," the surgeon replied.

"Do your best, Maître," Catherine returned. "You have the reputation of being the ablest man in the kingdom."

Ambroise did not reply to the compliment; but placing his left hand against the upper part of the helmet, he grasped with his right the splinter, and with a motion as steady as if he were operating, as he said, on the humblest soldier in the army, he drew the wooden splinter from the wound.

Henri quivered from head to foot, and gasped, as though for breath.

"Now," said Ambroise, "take off the king's helmet and armor, and do it as gently as possible."

Monsieur de Vieilleville seized the helmet, but his hand trembled so that the surgeon stopped him.

"Let me do it," said he. "I am the only one whose hand has not the right to tremble;" and laying the king's head on his left arm, he slowly and carefully unfastened, without the least shock, the king's helmet.

The helmet off, the removal of the rest of the armor was less difficult. At length it was effected without the patient making any movement; for the moment he seemed completely paralyzed.

After the king had been laid on his bed, Ambroise Paré proceeded to dress the wound. His examination of the splinter, which he had laid on a table near the royal bed with the extremest care, indicated that the foreign body had pierced nearly three inches into the head, and the matter round the top of the splinter seemed to show that it had penetrated to the membrane of the brain.

Ambroise Paré began by making an incision into the wound, gently raising its edges with a spatula, and with a silver stylet probed the wound. As he had inferred from the size of the splinter which he had just drawn, this wound was a terrible one. He immediately applied to its orifice some powdered charcoal, which at that period was used in the place of lint; then he laid on the eye a compress, moistened with ice-cold water, which was to be renewed every quarter of an hour.

As soon as the water came in contact with the patient's face it contracted, — a proof that all sensibility was not yet extinct. The surgeon seemed to experience a certain satisfaction at the sight of this nervous contraction; then turning toward the members of the royal family, who were all in tears, and addressing the queen, he said, —

“Madame, I cannot yet foresee what the result will be; but at present I can assure your Majesty that there is no immediate danger of death. Consequently, I shall advise you to retire to take some rest, and not to give way to your grief. As for me, from this moment until the death or recovery of the king, I shall not leave his bedside.”

Catherine approached the patient and leaned forward to kiss his hand; but in kissing it she drew from his finger the celebrated ring which Madame de Nemours had already once stolen from him, and to which, it was said, the mystery of the long attachment of Henri for Diane was due.

As though he felt some one tugging violently at his heart-strings, the patient quivered just as he had done when the lance-splinter was drawn from his wound.

Ambroise Paré moved toward him rapidly.

“Pardon, Madame,” said he, “but what have you done to the king?”

“Nothing, Monsieur,” said Catherine, closing her hand

with the ring in it; "perhaps the king in his swoon has recognized me."

The queen then left the apartment, followed by the dauphin and the other princes and princesses. In the corridor Catherine met Monsieur de Vieilleville, who had just changed his linen, as he had been covered by the king's blood.

"Monsieur de Vieilleville," the queen asked, "whither are you going?"

"I am the grand chamberlain, Madame," Monsieur de Vieilleville replied, "and my duty is not for an hour to leave his Majesty."

"Your duty accords with my desire, Monsieur de Vieilleville. You know that I have always regarded you as a good friend to me."

Monsieur de Vieilleville bowed. Although at this period Catherine had not treated her "good friends" as badly as she did afterward, it was not without disquiet that any one whom she honored by that title became aware of the favor bestowed.

"Madame," said he, "I humbly thank your Majesty for the estimation in which you hold me, and I will do all I can not to forfeit it."

"For that you will have only one thing to do, Monsieur le Comte; and that is very easy, namely, to prevent Madame de Valentinois and any of the constable's followers from approaching the king."

"But, Madame," said Vieilleville, greatly embarrassed by the mandate, which would doubtless strengthen his position at court if the king died, but would probably have the opposite effect if he recovered, "suppose that Madame de Valentinois insists on being admitted?"

"You will tell her, my dear Count, that as long as Henri de Valois is unconscious Queen Catherine governs,

and Queen Catherine de' Medici wills that the courtesan Diane de Poitiers shall not enter the bedchamber of her dying husband."

"Confound it!" muttered Vieilleville, scratching his ear; then he said aloud, "The report is, Madame, that there is a certain ring —"

"You are mistaken, Monsieur de Vieilleville," said the queen, interrupting him; "this ring is no longer in existence, — or, at least, it is here. We drew it from our beloved consort's hand, so that if his Majesty should die, which God forbid! we should have the power to seal with his seal your patent as marshal of France, which you know has not yet been signed."

"Madame," returned Vieilleville, reassured by the sight of the ring, at the same time that Catherine's promise also gave him confidence, "you have said it; you are queen, and being queen your commands shall be obeyed."

"Ah, I well knew that you were my friend, my dear Vieilleville!" said Catherine; and she withdrew, doubtless bearing in her heart great disdain — which later completely filled it — for the human race.

The king remained four hours motionless, and during that time Madame de Valentinois several times presented herself at the royal chamber; but the door was kept obstinately closed to her. Some of her friends advised her to leave the Château des Tournelles, and to repair to her apartments at the Louvre, or even to her Château d'Anet, there to watch events, — which made her understand that if she persisted in remaining some misfortune might happen to her. But to such advisers she had only one reply: she said that her place was where the king was. And as long as the king retained a spark of life she was perfectly tranquil; her most deadly enemies dared not attempt anything against either her life or her liberty.

On the evening of the third day — seventy-two hours after the accident — a man covered with dust dismounted from a horse bathed in foam and sweat at the gate of the Château des Tournelles, saying that he had been sent by King Philip II., and demanding to see King Henri if he still lived. We know what rigid orders had been given, and how carefully guarded was the door of the king's bedchamber.

"What name shall I announce to her Majesty the Queen?" asked the usher, who was responsible to Monsieur de Vieilleville for every one who entered the room.

"It is of no use to give my name to the queen," the unknown replied; "tell my learned brother Ambroise Paré that Andrew Vesalius is here."

The usher entered the chamber of the king (who still lay in a swoon, seemingly quite unconscious), and addressing Ambroise Paré, who, with a recently decapitated head on a table before him, was trying to discover in the brain the still unknown mysteries of human life and intelligence, repeated the name which the stranger had given him. Ambroise Paré asked him to repeat the name; and when he was certain that he was not mistaken, he uttered a cry of joy.

"Ah, gentlemen, good news! If it is possible for human skill to save the king, there is only one man who is able to put forth that skill. Gentlemen, thank God, that man is here!" And opening wide the door, he said, "Come in, come in, you who are now here the sole true king!" Then turning to Monsieur de Vieilleville he added, "Monsieur le Comte, be kind enough to inform the queen that the illustrious Andrew Vesalius is in attendance on her august consort."

Monsieur de Vieilleville, happy to convey to the queen even the appearance of good news, hurriedly left the

room, at the door of which stood, as we have said, a man nearly forty-six, of medium height, with keen and intelligent eye, of dark complexion, and frizzled hair and beard. This was Andrew Vesalius, whom King Philip, who had been informed of the accident to his father-in-law by a courier despatched by the Duke of Savoy, sent off post-haste to the help of the wounded man. The messenger had overtaken the King of Spain at Cambrai; and as Vesalius was then in attendance as court-physician, the illustrious anatomist was able by the close of the third day to reach the bedside of the dying king.

When it is remembered what a great reputation at this time Vesalius enjoyed, we shall not be surprised at the reverence with which he was received by so modest and conscientious a man as his brother practitioner, Ambroise Paré, much superior to Vesalius in actual practice, much more skilful than he in the extraction of bullets, or in cases where amputation was necessary, but far his inferior in everything which related to anatomy.

Anatomy, indeed, the Flemish physician had studied unremittingly during the whole of his life. At a period when religion regarded the body as sacred, and set itself in violent opposition to any method by which men should seek in death the secrets of life, he found himself exposed to fanatical hatred in consequence of his attempts to advance the cause of science, then stumbling in the darkness of ignorance. Vesalius studied first at Montpellier. As early as 1376 the heads of the school there had obtained permission from Louis d'Anjou — a permission which was continued after his death by Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, and by Charles VI. of France — every year to take the body of a criminal who had perished on the scaffold and dissect it. Vesalius, then eighteen, studied at this school in 1532; he afterward went to Paris,

where his daring in braving the dangers incident to body-snatching gained him considerable notoriety. Any night he might have been seen digging in cemeteries, or searching about gibbets, where he disputed with crows and dogs for the possession of corpses which were often in a state of putrefaction.

After three years spent in labors of this dismal character, Vesalius was appointed to the chair at Louvain, and received permission there to give anatomical demonstrations, whose value was greatly enhanced by the possession of a complete skeleton. But this skeleton arousing the suspicions of the authorities, Vesalius was summoned before them and questioned as to where he had procured it.

"I brought it with me from Paris," said Vesalius.

The illustrious anatomist did not strictly adhere to the truth on this occasion; but he did not regard as a sin an untruth which contributed to the welfare of humanity.

How did Vesalius procure his skeleton? In this way. One day, while crossing with one of his friends, named Gemma, the field set apart for executions, which was distant about a quarter of a mile from Louvain, Vesalius saw a corpse which, mangled by birds of prey, was reduced almost to a skeleton. The glistening whiteness of these bones attracted the attention of this sublime sacrilegist, and he determined to carry off the human carcase. The lower extremities were easily enough detached; but lest the vertebræ of the neck, broken by the weight of the executioner, who, as is well known, sat on the shoulders of the convict, should not be able to support the body, it was customary to fasten a chain around it, which was attached to the gibbet. It was necessary, therefore, to return after nightfall for the remainder of the booty. The bones of the legs and thighs were carried off and concealed; then in the night, when owls and witches are

reputed alone to haunt desolate fields, Vesalius returned, — this time without his friend, whose courage failed him, — and with no other help save that of his own hands, he succeeded in detaching the skeleton from the chain. In three nights the separate portions of what had been a living, thinking, loving, suffering man, like him who thus carried off the remains, were brought back to the town; three other nights sufficed to clean them, to restore them to their original position, and to fasten them by means of steel wire. Thus Andrew Vesalius procured the skeleton whose possession was such a scandal in the eyes of the authorities of Louvain, and which he declared he had brought with him from Paris.

Soon after, war broke out between Charles V. and François I., and Vesalius followed the Spanish army, as Ambroise Paré followed the French. Twice only — once at Montpellier, and once at Paris — had he the opportunity of being present at the dissection of human corpses before putrefaction had set in, and there, freer than on battle-fields, he gave himself up with almost frenzied delight to his anatomical studies, though he had to pursue them clandestinely. These studies have been immortalized by the pencil of Rembrandt. Then, fortified with the experience gained from many autopsies, made both in public and in his private cabinet, Vesalius dared to expose the errors of Galen, who, never having dissected the human body, having confined himself solely to the inferior animals, abounded with errors. Vesalius did even more; he brought out a "Manual of Anatomy," which he dedicated to Prince Don Philip, and which he declared was only as a prospectus of a great work which he promised to publish later. But from that moment his rivals, finding something tangible to grasp, attacked his book as sacrilegious, and roused, from Venice to Toledo,

such a clamor that even Charles V. was frightened by it, and submitted the book to the theologians of the University of Salamanca, commanding them to state authoritatively whether it was or was not permitted to Catholics to dissect human bodies. Fortunately the monks replied by this decree, which shows greater wisdom than is usual with decrees emanating from religious bodies, —

“It is useful, and therefore lawful.”

Then, when ascertained facts were insufficient to condemn Vesalius, recourse was had to calumny. The report was spread that the anatomist, in too great a hurry to study the disease of which a Spanish nobleman was sick, had opened his body before death, thus accelerating it. The heirs of the dead man, it was said, had broken into the bedchamber where Vesalius was locked in with the corpse, and had arrived in time to demonstrate that the heart, which had been laid bare, had not ceased to beat. The nobleman's name was not indeed given, and the heirs, who one might suppose would be interested in bringing the culprit to justice, remained silent; but though there was absolutely no proof for the accusation, it was received as truth without examination, and one of the charges made by the enemies of Vesalius was that he had opened the body of a man while still alive. This time the rumor was of so serious a nature that it required nothing less than the obstinacy of Philip II. — the term is not exaggerated — to save Vesalius, not from a public trial, but from falling a victim to the popular fury, which characterized his conduct as sacrilegious and abominable. Alas! Philip later grew weary of the protection which he gave to this martyr to genius; and Vesalius, compelled to quit France, Italy, and Spain, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. On his return he was wrecked off the island of Zante, where he perished of want and hunger.

But at the period which we are now considering, the powerful arm which maintained him was not yet weary, and the King of Spain, assured of the skill of his physician, sent him, as we have seen, to the help of his father-in-law, Henri II.

CHAPTER XV.

FLORENTINE POLICY.

ANDREW VESALIUS examined the patient, inquired of Ambroise Paré as to his treatment, signified his approval of it in every particular, and after making himself acquainted with all the facts, asked to see the splinter extracted by the skill of the clever surgeon. By means of a line marked on the splinter Paré was able to show just how far it had penetrated ; whereupon Vesalius asked as to the direction, whether horizontal, diagonal, or oblique. To which question Paré replied that the wood had penetrated obliquely ; and taking up the head which he was in the act of examining when the arrival of Vesalius interrupted him, he thrust the splinter into the eye as far as the place where it had penetrated Henri's head, giving it the exact direction which, as far as he could remember, it had originally taken.

"Now," said Ambroise Paré, "here is the head. I was engaged in making an incision, in order again to see what harm it must necessarily have wrought in the brain tissue."

Four convicts who had been condemned to death had already been beheaded, that the surgeons might make on their heads the experiments which Ambroise Paré invited Vesalius to repeat with him. But the latter interrupted his colleague, saying, —

"It is unnecessary. I see, by the length of the splinter and the direction it has taken, the nature of the injuries

it has wrought. There has been fracture of the right superciliary arch and of the superior coat of the orbit; penetration, with fracture of the bones, and laceration of the dura mater, pia mater, and arachnoid, and the lower part of the anterior right lobe of the brain; extension of the penetration into the higher part of the same lobe, — whence inflammation, then congestion, with extravasation, in all probability, of the two anterior lobes."

"You have stated the case exactly!" cried Paré, astounded; "for I have come to the same conclusions by experimenting on these heads."

"Yes," said Vesalius, smiling, "with the exception of the extravasation, which would necessarily be absent in a wound made after death."

"Well," asked Paré, "what is your opinion in regard to the wound?"

"I say positively that it is mortal," said Vesalius.

A faint cry was heard behind the anatomist. Catherine de' Medici, conducted by the Comte de Vieilleville, had entered the sick man's chamber while Vesalius was describing to his colleague the nature of the injury wrought by the splinter, and she had overheard the anatomist's opinion in regard to the prognosis, — hence the cry which she uttered, and which drew the attention of the surgeons to her presence, which, absorbed in their scientific conversation, neither had observed.

"Mortal!" murmured Catherine. "You say, Monsieur, that the wound is mortal?"

"Madame," Vesalius replied, "I consider it my duty to repeat to your Majesty what I have already said to my learned colleague, Ambroise Paré. The death of a king is not an ordinary event, and the heirs to princely power need to be doubly warned of the exact hour when it will slip from the hands of the dead and pass into those of the

living. However sad the avowal is, yet, Madame, I must repeat it, the king's wound is inevitably mortal."

The queen passed a handkerchief over her forehead, which was bathed with perspiration. "But," she asked, "will he die without recovering consciousness?"

Vesalius went to the patient and felt his pulse; then, after a moment's delay, he said, turning toward Ambroise Paré, —

"Ninety-six."

"In that case the fever has abated," the latter replied; "during the first forty-eight hours the pulse rose as high as a hundred and ten."

"Madame," said Vesalius, "if the pulse continues to decrease at that rate, and if there should be momentary reabsorption of the extravasation, it is probable that before death the king will recover speech for a short time."

"And when will that be?" Catherine asked anxiously.

"Ah, Madame," said Vesalius, "you ask from human science more than it knows. However, probability taking the place of certainty, I will say that if the king is to recover from this swoon, it will be about noon to-morrow."

"Vieilleville," said the queen, "you hear! Let me be immediately apprised of the king's awakening. I must be here absolutely alone, to hear what the king says."

The next day, about two o'clock in the afternoon, his pulse having fallen to sixty-two, the royal patient made a slight movement and heaved a weak sigh.

"Monsieur de Vieilleville," said Vesalius, "inform her Majesty, the queen-mother, the king will in all probability awake from his swoon and will be able to speak."

The grand chamberlain hurriedly left the room; and on his return, five minutes afterward, with the queen, Henri began to recover consciousness, and murmured these words, which were scarcely intelligible, —

"The queen — let some one go and seek the queen."

"I am here, my Lord!" cried Catherine, falling on her knees before the bed on which the king lay.

Ambroise Paré regarded with astonishment this man who, if he could not control life and death, at least seemed to know all their secrets.

"Madame," Vesalius inquired, "is it your Majesty's desire that Monsieur Paré and I should remain in this room?"

The queen looked inquiringly at the patient.

"Let them remain," murmured Henri. "Bear in mind that I am so weak that I feel every minute as though I should faint."

Thereupon Vesalius made a motion with his hand, took from his pocket a small phial containing a liquid red like blood, poured a few drops into a little gilt spoon, and put it between the king's lips. Thereupon Henri uttered a sigh of relief, and his cheeks took on a slightly healthier tinge.

"Ah," said he, "I feel better!" Then, gazing around him, he exclaimed, "Ah, is that you, Vieilleville? Then you have not forsaken me?"

"Oh, no, Sire, not for a moment!" the count replied, sobbing.

"You told me so, you told me so," murmured the king, "but I did not believe you; I was wrong. Nor you either, Madame; I have not listened to you. Do not forget that Monsieur de Coligny is one of my true friends, for he did more than even you to dissuade me; he mentioned Montgomery's name as the man who was to be the means of my death."

"He named Montgomery!" cried Catherine. "And how did he know —"

"Ah! thanks to a prediction made to the Emperor

Charles V. By the way, I hope that Monsieur de Montgomery is at liberty ? ”

Catherine did not reply.

“ I hope that he is,” continued Henri. “ I ask, and if need be I insist, that he suffer in no respect.”

“ Yes, Sire,” Vieilleville replied, “ Monsieur de Montgomery is at liberty. He sends every hour, day and night, for news of your Majesty ; he is in despair.”

“ Let him be consoled. Poor De Lorges ! he has ever served me faithfully, and recently in the employ of the regent of Scotland.”

“ Alas,” murmured Catherine, “ would to Heaven he had remained in Scotland ! ”

“ Madame, it was not his will, but my command, which led to his return from Scotland. He refused to tilt with me : my order compelled him. Everything is due to my evil fortune, not to him. Let us then not be disobedient to the Divine Will, but rather take advantage of this moment of life which is miraculously granted me to set our most pressing affairs in order.”

“ Oh, my Lord ! ” murmured Catherine.

“ And first,” Henri resumed, “ let us remember what we have promised our friends ; then we may busy ourselves with the treaties made with our enemies. You know what has been promised to Vieilleville, Madame ? ”

“ Yes, Sire ! ”

“ His patent as marshal of France was about to be signed when this terrible accident happened to me ; it must be done.”

“ Yes, Sire,” Vieilleville replied. “ Your Majesty had the kindness to direct me to take it to Monsieur le Chancelier, in order that I should have it signed on the first occasion ; and it is here. I had it on my person on that fatal 30th of June ; and as I have never taken my clothes

off since, nor have ever left your Majesty, I have it still by me ;” and as he pronounced these words, Vieilleville held out the patent toward the king.

“I cannot move without great pain, Madame,” said the patient to Catherine ; “therefore have the kindness to sign this patent for me and to date it from to-day, at the same time giving the reason why you sign in my stead, and then give it to my old friend.”

Vieilleville, sobbing, fell on his knees and kissed the king’s hand, which lay extended on the bed, and was as white as the coverlet on which it rested.

In the mean time Catherine wrote at the bottom of the patent : —

By command and in the stead of the king, who is wounded, and at his bedside.

CATHERINE, *Queen*.

July 4, 1559.

She read and showed to the king what she had written.

“Will that do, Sire ?” she asked.

“Yes, Madame,” said Henri ; “and now give the patent to Vieilleville.”

Catherine put it into the latter’s hands ; at the same time she said in a low voice, —

“You now have the patent ; but none the less do not forget your promise, my good friend, for I may even now be able to deprive you of it.”

“Rest easy, Madame,” said Vieilleville ; “I have given you my promise, and I shall not break it ;” and folding up his patent he put it into his pocket.

“Now,” said the king, “are the Duke of Savoy and my sister married ?”

“No, Sire,” Catherine replied ; “the time would have been ill chosen for marriage festivities.”

“On the contrary,” said the king, “I wish them to be

married without any loss of time. Vieilleville, go and fetch the duke and my sister."

Catherine, looking toward the king, smiled, as a sign of assent, and accompanying Vieilleville to the door, she said, —

"Count, do not go for the duke and Madame Marguerite until I reopen this door and give you the order myself. Wait in this antechamber, and on your liberty, on your life, on your soul, not a word to any one of the return of the king to consciousness, especially to Madame de Valentinois."

"Fear nothing, Madame," said Vieilleville; and he remained in the adjoining room, where, after she had closed the door, Catherine could hear the sound of the rapid steps which gave evidence of the emotion which the new marshal experienced.

"Where are you, Madame," said the king, "and what are you doing?"

"I am here, Monsieur. I was telling Monsieur de Vieilleville where Monsieur de Savoie was most likely to be found, if the prince should not be in his apartments."

"What do you mean, — 'if he should not be in his apartments'?"

"But he will be there. Monsieur de Savoie leaves the castle in the evening, but he always returns at daybreak."

"Ah!" said the king, with an envious sigh, "there was a time when I used to ride along the roads on pleasant nights and on a good horse, — *per amica silentia lunæ*, as my little daughter Mary Stuart says. How sweet it was to feel the fresh breeze, and to watch the leaves quiver by the pale light of the moon! Ah! fever did not then consume me as it does now! *Mon Dieu!* have pity on me, for I am in great pain!"

In the mean time Catherine approached the bed; but

as she did so she signed to the two doctors to withdraw. Paré and Vesalius, bowing reverently, obeyed ; and understanding that these two rulers of the earth had some great State secret to discuss, as one of them was about to set out on a journey whence there is no return, they withdrew into the embrasure of a window, while Catherine took a seat near Henri.

"Well," said the king, "they are coming, are they not?"

"Yes, Sire ; but before they come, will your Majesty permit me to say a few words in regard to certain affairs of State?"

"Say on, Madame," the king replied ; "though I am very tired, and I see the things of this world only, as it seems, through a mist."

"No matter ; God will illuminate this cloud through which you see them, and will doubtless grant you a clearer judgment than when you were in sound health."

Henri turned with difficulty toward Catherine, and gazed at her with an eye in which, though fever shone, there was also intelligence. It was evident that he made a supreme effort to make himself equal to that keen Florentine intellect whose tortuous skill he had more than once had occasion to appreciate.

"Speak, Madame," said he.

"Pardon me, Sire," resumed Catherine, "but it is not only my opinion, and that of your physicians, who are always hopeful, but it is even your own, — is it not ? — that your life is in the greatest danger."

"I am mortally stricken, Madame," said the king ; "and it is unquestionably only by a miracle that God allows me to have this last interview with you."

"Well, Sire, if it is by a miracle," said the queen, "let us take advantage of it, that Our Lord may not have performed it in vain."

"I am listening to you, Madame," said Henri.

"Sire, do you remember what Monsieur de Guise said to you in my apartments when you were about to sign that wretched treaty of Cateau-Cambresis?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Monsieur de Guise is a great friend of France —"

"Nonsense!" murmured the king; "a Lorrainer —"

"But I, Sire, I am not a Lorrainer."

"No," said Henri, "you are —" He stopped.

"Finish," said the queen. "I am a Florentine, and consequently a true ally of the house of France. Well, I tell you, Sire, that the Lorrainer and the Florentine on this occasion have been more French than certain Frenchmen whom I know."

"I do not say that you are wrong," murmured Henri.

"The Lorrainer and the Florentine said to you, 'Sire, such a treaty as you are asked to sign, or rather that you propose to sign, might possibly have been acceptable on the day after the battle of St. Lawrence's or after the capture of St. Quentin; but now that Monsieur de Guise has returned from Italy, when we have recaptured Calais, and have fifty thousand fully armed men in the field and thirty thousand in garrison in our fortified towns, such a treaty is a perfect absurdity.' That is what the Lorrainer and the Florentine then told you, and what you were not willing to listen to."

"True," said Henri, as though awaking from a dream, "and I was wrong."

"Then you confess it?" said Catherine, her eyes sparkling.

"Yes, I confess it; but it is too late."

"It is never too late, Sire!" said the Florentine.

"I do not understand you," said the king.

"Will you leave the matter to me?" Catherine resumed. "Trust it to me, and I will give you back all your French towns; I will give you back Piedmont, Nice, and La Bresse, and I will open a way to Milan."

"And have the kindness, Madame, to say what would be necessary for that?"

"It would be necessary for you to say that, notwithstanding the majority of the dauphin, in consequence of his feeble health and his want of acquaintance with affairs, you will nominate a council to govern the kingdom for the space of a year, and longer if need be, which shall be composed of Monsieur de Guise, the Cardinal de Lorraine, and myself, who during this year shall have entire control of every department of the government, — civil, religious, and political."

"And what will François say?"

"He will be only too happy. He thinks of nothing but the happiness of being the husband of his little Scottish girl, and has no further ambition."

"Yes, indeed," said Henri, "it is great happiness to be young, and to be the husband of a wife you love!" and he sighed. "But there is one thing which spoils all this," he continued. "François will be king of France; and a king of France must regard his kingdom as of greater consequence than the gratification of his passions."

Catherine glanced at Henri; she would greatly have liked to say, "O King, who gives such good advice, why did you not follow it?" But she was afraid of bringing back to his mind the remembrance of Madame de Valentinois, and was silent, or, rather, she continued to guide the conversation in the direction which she had already given it.

“And then, I regent, Monsieur de Guise lieutenant-general, and Monsieur de Lorraine administrator of the kingdom, we would charge ourselves with everything.”

“With everything! What do you mean by those words, ‘We will charge ourselves with everything’?”

“We should annul the treaty, Sire; retain the hundred and ninety-eight towns, Piedmont, La Bresse, Nice, Savoy, and Milan.”

“Yes,” said the king; “and meantime I present myself before God guilty of perjury, taking advantage of my death to break a promise. The sin is too great, Madame; I shall not risk it. If I were to live I do not say what I might do; I should have time to repent.” Then, raising his voice, he cried, “Monsieur de Vieilleville!”

“What are you doing?” asked Catherine.

“I am calling for Monsieur de Vieilleville, who certainly has not gone for the Duke of Savoy.”

“And why do you call him?”

“Because I want him to go and fetch the duke.”

Indeed, Vieilleville, who heard himself called, re-entered the room that very instant.

“Monsieur de Vieilleville,” said the king, “you did right to wait for a second order before you fetched Monsieur de Savoie, since the queen told you to do so; but this second order I now give you myself. Go, then, this moment, and see that within five minutes Monsieur de Savoie and Madame Marguerite are here.” Then, as though he felt himself growing weaker, he looked round, and seeing the two doctors, who, hearing the king raise his voice, drew near him, he said, —

“Just now some one gave me a few drops of a cordial which greatly revived me. I must live an hour longer; let me have some more of that cordial.”

Vesalius took the gilt spoon, poured five or six drops

of a blood-colored liquid into it, and while Ambroise Paré raised the dying man's head, he slipped it into his mouth.

Meantime Monsieur de Vieilleville, not daring to disobey the king, had gone to fetch the Duke of Savoy and Madame Marguerite, while Catherine, standing near the bed, smiled at the king with anger in her heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

A KING OF FRANCE HAS BUT HIS WORD.

FIVE minutes later Emmanuel Philibert entered the chamber by one door, and Marguerite by the other. A gleam of joy passed over the faces of the betrothed pair when they saw that the patient was conscious. Indeed, thanks to the cordial which Henri had just swallowed, there was, in comparison to the state of lethargy in which he had been lying, a great amelioration in his condition. Catherine stepped backward to give Emmanuel and Marguerite her place at the bedside, and the betrothed pair knelt before the dying king.

"That is well," said Henri, regarding them with a gentle and sad smile; "that is how I would have you, my children. Remain as you are."

"Oh, Sire," murmured Emmanuel, "what hope!"

"Oh, brother," said Marguerite, "what happiness!"

"Yes," said Henri, "there is one cause of happiness, for which I thank God; it is that I have recovered consciousness. But there is no hope; do not, then, let us count on what may be, but act like men to whom time is of the greatest possible importance. Emmanuel, take my sister's hand."

Emmanuel obeyed; it might have been noticed that Marguerite had put it out at least half-way to meet his.

"Prince," continued the king, "I wished you to marry my sister when I was in health. Now that I am on my death-bed, I do more than wish, — I insist upon it."

"Sire!" the duke repeated the word.

"My dear brother!" said Marguerite, kissing the king's hand.

"Listen, Emmanuel," Henri resumed, in a voice of extreme solemnity. "You are now not only a great prince, thanks to the provinces which I have restored to you, and a nobleman, thanks to your ancestors, but you are in addition, thanks to your uprightness of character and your generous heart, an honorable man. Emmanuel, I address you as an honorable man!"

Emmanuel raised his stately head; the nobility of his soul shone in his eyes, and with the sweet and firm voice peculiarly his own, he said, —

"Speak, Sire!"

"Emmanuel," continued the king, "a peace has just been signed, — a peace prejudicial to French interests —"

The prince made a gesture of impatience.

"But that is of very little consequence, since the treaty is signed," resumed the king. "This peace makes you at the same time the ally of France and of Spain; you are King Philip's cousin, but you will soon be uncle to King François. To-day your sword is of the greatest weight in the scales where God weighs the destinies of kingdoms; that sword scattered our army on St. Lawrence's; that sword overturned the ramparts of St. Quentin. Well, now, I adjure that sword to be as just as its wearer is honorable, as terrible as he is brave! If the peace sworn between King Philip and me is broken by France, let that sword turn against France! If this peace is broken by Spain, let it be turned against Spain! If the office of constable were vacant, God is my witness, Duke, that I would give it to you, as to the prince who has married my sister, as to a knight whose duty it will be to defend the borders of my kingdom; unfortunately, that

position is filled by a man whom I ought perhaps to deprive of it, but who, after all, has served me, or believes he has served me, faithfully. No matter! You regard yourself as pledged to nothing but justice and right. Now, if justice and right are on the side of France, throw your arm and your sword into the scale with France; but if they are with the Spaniard, then let your sword fight for him, and against France. Will you swear to me that you will do this, Duke of Savoy?"

"By the noble heart which appeals to my honor," said he, "I swear!"

Henri drew a long breath. "Thanks!" he said. Then, after a moment's silence, in which he seemed mentally to be thanking God, he resumed, "And now, what is the earliest day, after all the necessary formalities have been concluded, on which the marriage can take place?"

"The 9th of July, Sire."

"Then swear to me this: that whether I am alive or dead, by my bedside or at my tomb, your marriage shall be celebrated on the 9th of July."

Marguerite hastily glanced at Emmanuel, and in the look a little anxiety was concealed. But he, drawing her close to him, and kissing her forehead as he would have kissed a sister's, said, —

"Sire, receive this second oath as you received the first. I swear both with equal solemnity; and may God visit me with a like punishment if I fail in either!"

Marguerite turned pale, and seemed about to faint. At this moment the door was timidly and hesitatingly opened, and the head of the dauphin was seen.

"Who is coming in?" asked the king, whose senses had acquired that acuteness characteristic of sick persons.

"Oh, my father is speaking!" cried the dauphin, losing all fear, and hurrying into the room.

The king's face brightened. "Oh, my son!" he cried, "you are indeed welcome, for I have something of importance to say to you." Then he said to the Duke of Savoy, "Emmanuel, you have just kissed my sister; now kiss my son, who will soon be your nephew."

The duke took the boy in his arms, clasped him tenderly to his breast, and kissed him on both cheeks.

"You will be mindful of your two oaths, brother?" said the king.

"Yes, Sire; and will keep the one as faithfully as the other, — that I swear."

"That is well; now I wish to be alone with the dauphin."

Emmanuel and Marguerite withdrew, but Catherine remained.

"Well?" said the king, addressing her.

"Do you wish me to go too, Sire?" she asked.

"Yes, Madame, you also," the king replied.

"When his Majesty desires to see me again he will summon me," said the Florentine.

"When this conversation is at an end you may return, Madame, whether I summon you or not. But," he added, with a sad smile, "most probably I shall not summon you, as I feel very weak. Nevertheless, you will come."

Catherine went directly to the door; but she suddenly stopped, hesitated, and turning, came again to the bedside and kissed the king's hand. Then she went out, and in leaving the chamber of the dying man she gave a long look behind her, full of anxiety.

Although the king heard the door close behind the queen, he nevertheless waited a moment; then, addressing the dauphin, he asked, —

"Your mother is no longer here, François, is she?"

"No, Sire," the dauphin replied.

"Bolt the door; and return immediately, for I feel that I am growing rapidly weaker."

François hastened to obey; he slid the bolt, and returned to his father, whose appearance frightened him.

"Oh, *mon Dieu*, Sire!" he said, "you are very pale! What is your pleasure?"

"First call the doctor," said Henri.

"Gentlemen," cried the dauphin, turning toward the two physicians, "come quickly! The king calls you."

Vesalius and Ambroise Paré drew near the bedside.

"Do you see?" said Vesalius to his colleague. "He has doubtless just felt the symptoms of approaching death."

"Gentlemen," said Henri, "strength, strength! Give me strength!"

"Sire," Vesalius replied, hesitating.

"Have you no more of that elixir?" asked the dying man.

"Certainly, Sire, I have more."

"Very well, then?"

"Sire, this cordial will give your Majesty only an artificial strength."

"Eh, what matters, provided it be strength!"

"And perhaps, if it is too freely used, it will shorten your Majesty's life."

"Monsieur," said the king, "it is now no longer a question of the duration of my life, but whether I shall be able to say that to the dauphin which I must say to him; and then I do not care if I die at the last word."

"Sire, a command from your Majesty — But I gave you the cordial for the second time only after much hesitation."

"Give me some of the elixir for the third time, Monsieur; it is my desire." The king's head now sank into

the pillow, his eyes closed, and so deadly a pallor overspread his cheeks that it seemed as though he were about to die then and there.

"My father is dying! he is dying!" cried the dauphin.

"The king has still three or four hours to live," said Vesalius; "do not fear." And this time, without making use of the spoon, he poured a few drops of the cordial between the half-opened lips of the king.

Its effect was this time not so rapid as before; but it was just as efficacious. After the lapse of a few seconds the muscles of the king's face quivered slightly, the blood seemed to circulate under the skin, the teeth were less firmly set, and his eyes gradually opened, at first looking glassy, but soon growing brighter. At length he breathed, or rather sighed.

"Oh," he said, "thanks to God —" And he looked round inquiringly for the dauphin.

"I am here, my father," said the young prince, kneeling by the bedside.

"Paré," said the king, "raise me with the pillows, and put my arm around the dauphin's neck, that I may cling to him while I tread the last step into my tomb."

The two doctors were already beside the king; then, with the skill which knowledge of anatomy gives, Vesalius, slipping the cushions of a sofa behind the pillows, raised Henri into a sitting posture, while Ambroise Paré placed the king's arm — which paralysis had already rendered cold and heavy as death — around the dauphin's neck. Then the two physicians discreetly withdrew to the window, where they had before conversed.

The king made a great effort, and the father's lips touched those of the son.

"My father!" murmured the boy, while two big tears rolled down his cheeks.

"My son," said the king, "you are now sixteen, and are a man; and I am going to talk to you as though you were a man."

"Sire!"

"I say more, — you are king; for can I regard myself any longer as of this world? And I am going to talk to you as to a king."

"Speak, father!" said the dauphin.

"My son," continued Henri, "during my life I have made many mistakes, sometimes through weakness, but never through hatred or malice."

François manifested some emotion.

"Let me finish. It is fit that I should confess to you, my successor, that you may avoid those errors into which I have fallen."

"My father, if there were errors, they were not of your commission."

"No, my child; but I must answer for them before God and to men. One of the last and the greatest," continued the king, "was committed at the instigation of the constable and of Madame de Valentinois. I was blinded, insensate. I ask your pardon, my son."

"Oh, Sire, Sire!" cried the dauphin.

"This blunder is the peace with Spain, recently signed, — the giving up of Piedmont, La Bresse, Savoy, Milan, and of a hundred and ninety-eight fortified towns, in return for which France received only St. Quentin, Ham, and Le Catelet. You are listening?"

"Yes, father."

"Just now your mother was here; and she upbraided me with this mistake, and proposed to rectify it —"

"How could she do that, Sire," said the dauphin, with emotion, "since your word has been given?"

"Right, François, right!" said Henri. "Yes, the error

was a great one ; but my word is given. François, whatever is said to you, however much you may be urged, whatever may be the allurements which they may employ, — though a woman kneel to you in an alcove, though a priest adjure you in the confessional, though by the aid of magic my spirit be raised to induce you to believe that I command you, — my son, by the honor of my name, whence your own derives its lustre, change nothing in the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, however disastrous it be ; change nothing in it because it is so disastrous, and ever retain on your lips and in your heart this maxim of King John : ‘ A king of France has but his word ! ’ ”

“ My father,” said the dauphin, “ I swear to you, by the honor of your name, that it shall be as you desire.”

“ If your mother urges you ? ”

“ I will say to her, Sire, that I am your son as well as hers.”

“ If she commands ? ”

“ I will answer that I am king, and that it is for me to command, and not to obey.” And as he uttered these words the young prince raised himself with all the majesty so characteristic of the scions of the house of Valois.

“ Good ! my son,” returned Henri, “ good ! That is what I wished to say to you. And now, adieu ! I feel that I am growing weaker ; my sight is failing, you can hardly hear my voice. My son, repeat by my motionless body the oath which you have just taken, that you may be pledged both to the living and the dead. Then, after you have sworn, I shall be unconscious, therefore dead, and you will open the door to your mother. Adieu, François ! Adieu, my son ! Embrace your father for the last time. Sire, you are king of France ! ” And the king fell back, pale and motionless, on his pillow.

As his father's body fell backward, François, lissome

and pliant as a sapling, leaned forward with it; then he rose, and solemnly stretching forth his hand over it, which thenceforth might be regarded as a corpse, he said, —

“My father, I renew my oath faithfully to keep the peace which has been sworn to, nowever disastrous it may be for France! Nothing shall be taken away from or added to the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, however much I may be urged to break it, or whoever shall endeavor to bring about its rupture. May God, then, regard my oath as you regard it! ‘A king of France has but his word.’” And after kissing for the last time the pale and cold lips of his father, he went to let in Queen Catherine, whom he found standing, rigid and motionless, behind the door, waiting with impatience for the end of the interview at which she was not allowed to be present.

On the 9th of July following, at the bedside of the king, whom life, however feeble, still seemed unwilling to forsake, though its presence was manifested by a breath which scarcely dimmed a mirror, Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, in the presence of the whole court, solemnly married Marguerite de France, Duchesse de Berry, the officiating priest being the Cardinal de Lorraine; and the ceremony was concluded, by torchlight, a little past midnight, in St. Paul’s Church.

On the next day, the 10th of July, about four o’clock in the afternoon, — at the same hour that, ten days before, he had been so unfortunately struck by the Comte de Montgomery, — the king painlessly breathed his last, as Vesalius had foretold. His age was forty years three months and ten days, and he had reigned twelve years and three months. He had a moral advantage over his father, inasmuch as he took care that his promise to Philip II. should be kept, even after his death; while his father, when alive, broke his promise to Charles V.

On the same day Madame de Valentinois, who remained at the Palais des Tournelles until the king's death, left the palace and retired to her castle of Anet ; and the same evening the court returned to the Louvre, leaving the royal corpse in the care of the two physicians and four priests, — the former to embalm the body, the latter to pray over it.

At the gate, opening to the street, Catherine de' Medici and Mary Stuart chanced to meet ; and Catherine, according to her custom, — a custom which had lasted eighteen years, — was about to take precedence of the younger lady ; but she suddenly stopped, and giving way to Mary Stuart, she said with a sigh, —

“Proceed, Madame ; you are now queen.”

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH THE TREATY IS EXECUTED.

HENRI II. died veritable king of France, being raised on his death-bed for the purpose of ratifying his promise. On the 3d of July the letters patent restoring his dominions to Emmanuel Philibert were issued, and the prince immediately despatched three of the nobles most devoted to his hitherto adverse fortunes to resume possession of them. These were his lieutenant-general in Piedmont, Amédée de Valpergue; his lieutenant-general in Savoy, Maréchal de Chatam; and his lieutenant-general in Bresse, Philippe de Beaume, Lord of Montfalconnet.

This fidelity of King Henri to his promise exasperated the whole seigniory of France, whose mouthpiece is Brantôme. "The matter," says the chronicler, "was under consideration, and vigorously debated in the council, — one party maintaining that François II. was not bound to carry out engagements entered into by his father, especially when made with a weaker power; the other advised waiting until the king should be of age, asserting that the Duchess of Savoy had already endowed her husband with only too great advantages, and that ten princesses ought to have cost the crown less for dowries. For," adds the Sire de Brantôme, "between great personages there is perfect equality; but not between the great and their inferiors. It is the right of the great to determine what allowance shall be made to their inferiors, and the latter must be content with what the former

choose to let them have; and what that is to be, is a matter determined by expediency alone." The moral to be drawn is evident. To-day we do the same thing, without, however, being so outspoken about it. Wherefore the French, who for twenty-three years had regarded Piedmont as part of the realm of France, were exceedingly reluctant to give it up; and there was nearly open revolt against the commands which emanated from the court. Three successive demands had been made upon the Maréchal de Bourdillon that he should evacuate the strongholds, and before surrendering them to the Piedmontese officers he insisted that the orders should be registered by the parliament.

Meantime Emmanuel Philibert, notwithstanding his desire to return to his duchy, was still detained in France by certain indispensable duties. First, he had to repair to Brussels to take leave of King Philip II. and to resign the government of the Low Countries. Philip immediately appointed his natural sister, Margaret of Austria, Duchess of Parma, to the place filled by Emmanuel; then, as he had not been in Spain for a long time, the king determined to return thither with his young wife; and as Emmanuel was unwilling to leave Philip until, to use his own expression, there should be no land left on which he could follow him, he accompanied the king to Middelbourg, whence the latter set sail on the 25th of August. Thence Emmanuel returned forthwith to Paris to be present at the coronation of the young king.

Meantime François II. left Paris for his castle of Villers-Cotterets, followed by the court, under pretext of temporarily withdrawing from the world, but in reality to have greater leisure and opportunity for amusement. Fathers who transmit a throne to their sons are rarely long re-

gretted. "The king," says Monsieur de Montpleinchamp, one of the biographers of Emmanuel Philibert, "*went for the purpose of amusing himself* to the Château de Villers-Cotterets, and took with him the Duke of Savoy, his uncle, who while there fell sick of a fever."

The Château de Villers-Cotterets, begun by François I., had just been completed by Henri II.; and on the side facing the church may still be seen the initial of King Henri and that of Catherine de' Medici, an H and a K, — Catherine was then always written with a K, — surrounded by three crescents of Diane de Poitiers. A singular association of mistress and wife; though at the period we are treating of it would not seem anything like as strange as it would to-day.

The good Princess Marguerite, who adored her handsome duke, installed herself as his nurse, and was unwilling to share her watch. Fortunately, the fever by which the duke was stricken was only slight, caused by fatigue mingled with sad regrets. Emmanuel had won back a royal dukedom, but he had lost the very core of his heart. Leona had returned to Savoy, and was waiting at the village of Oleggio until the 17th of November, which was every year to unite the lovers.

At last that powerful fairy known as youth conquered fatigue and grief, and with the last ray of the summer sun the fever fled; so that on the 21st of September Emmanuel was able to accompany to Reims the young King François and Queen Mary Stuart, — who between them counted thirty-four years, — and to be present at the ceremony of their coronation.

As the Almighty gazed down on him whom the holy oil made his elect, he must in truth have been filled with compassion for this king who was to die within the year in a most mysterious manner, and on that queen who was

to be a prisoner for twenty years, and then to perish on the scaffold ! In another romance, "The Horoscope," we have tried to bring before our readers the events of this short reign, which lasted only four months and twenty-five days, during which period so many noteworthy incidents occurred.

After the coronation and the return of the king to Paris, Emmanuel Philibert considered that he had done his duty to the two kings, and took leave of his royal nephew as he had previously done of his cousin of Spain, in order to return to his own dominions, which he had not visited for so many years. The Princess Marguerite accompanied her husband as far as Lyons ; but she remained behind in that city, and he went on alone.

The state of the Duchy of Savoy at this period was truly deplorable, after it had been occupied by the foreigner for twenty-three years, and Emmanuel was actuated by the very natural desire of restoring order throughout his dominions before taking his wife to them. Moreover, it must be remembered that November was approaching ; and ever since Leona had parted from Emmanuel at Écouen, the latter had never lost sight of the 17th of that month, as the pilot keeps his eye ever fixed on the single star that is visible through the mist and darkness of a tempestuous night.

Scianca-Ferro accompanied the princess back to Paris ; and the duke, after paying a visit to Bresse, returned to Lyons, embarked in a vessel, and proceeded down the Rhone, during which voyage he nearly perished in a storm ; then, landing at Avignon, he journeyed toward Marseilles, where a company of Savoyard noblemen, commanded by André de Provana, awaited him. This company, which was composed of nobles who had remained faithful to the duke, could not control their impatience

sufficiently to await the young sovereign in his own territory, but went forward until they met him, so anxious were they to pay him the homage which they regarded as his due.

During the festivities which Marseilles celebrated in honor of the Duke of Savoy a royal remembrance reached him. François II. sent his uncle the collar of the Order of St. Michael. This present, by the way, was not characterized by extreme rarity. François II. had just distributed the collar to eighteen persons at random, among whom there were at least a dozen whose worth was questionable, to say no less; "so that," according to the chronicler from whom we borrow these details, "it received the name of 'collar for every sort of animal.'" Nevertheless Emmanuel, with his usual courtesy, took it and kissed it, saying, —

"Everything which my nephew sends me is dear to me; everything which comes to me from the King of France is precious." And at the same time he put it round his neck, close to the collar of the Golden Fleece, to show that he valued equally the presents both of the King of France and of Spain.

At Marseilles the duke set sail for Nice, — the single town which had remained in his possession before the peace. It must be remembered that "Nice" means "Victory," — a fact of which the historians of the time were mindful, witty writers as they were, and said that Victory ever remained faithful to Emmanuel Philibert. It must have been with mingled emotions of pride and joy that Emmanuel, as man, prince, and victor, returned to the castle which formerly he had entered as a child, weak, and a fugitive. But we shall not attempt to analyze his thoughts; that would be equivalent to making this book a history of sensations, and we are not

acquainted with an historian able adequately to record them.

At Nice at length, from the reports of faithful servants whom he had retained in Piedmont, in Bresse, and in Savoy, he got an exact idea of the state of the three provinces. The country was desolate. The transalpine provinces, completely surrounded by French territory, lay entirely open, and were divided into two parts by the lands of the Duc de Nemours, which belonged to France. This was one of the results of the policy of François I., who, for the purpose of separating Charles III., Emmanuel's father, from his nearest relatives, summoned to Paris Philip, Charles's younger brother, whose lands covered nearly half of Savoy; then, after getting him to the French court, he married him to Charlotte d'Orléans, and invested him with the Duchy of Nemours. It will be remembered that we have seen at St. Germain Jacques de Nemours, son of Philip, and that he was entirely devoted to French interests.

On another side the Bernois and the Valaisans disputed with Emmanuel Philibert the territory which they had seized on the shores of the Lake of Geneva; and as their claims had the support of Geneva, — the home of heresy and independence, — it was manifest that they had to be reckoned with. Moreover, Piedmont, Bresse, and Savoy were almost destitute of fortresses, as the French had destroyed those which in any way embarrassed them, and had preserved only the citadels of the five towns which they were to garrison until the Duchess of Savoy should present her lord with an heir. In addition, they had imposed and collected all the taxes; there were therefore absolutely no financial resources. The furniture, too, in the several palaces belonging to the prince was in a dilapidated state, and the crown jewels had long before been

pledged, — though the prince hoped one day to redeem them.

As a set-off to this poverty, the duke returned to his dukedom with only five or six hundred thousand gold crowns, arising from Princess Marguerite's dowry and Montmorency and Dandelot's ransom.

In addition to all this, absence and misfortune, two strong solvents of duty, affection, and devotion, had produced their usual effect: the nobles, who had not seen Emmanuel since his childhood, forgot their sovereign, and had become accustomed to live as though in a free confederation. Affairs assumed such an aspect in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, even under monarchs who were respected and obeyed; much more then under those who, powerless to protect themselves, were quite unable to protect and maintain the rights of others. It was for this reason that Philippe de Comines, for example, had renounced the service of the Duke of Burgundy to attach himself to that of Louis XI., that Taunegay du Châtel and the Vicomte de Rohan, subjects of the Duke of Brittany, swore allegiance to France; while, on the other hand, Durfé, a French subject, swore allegiance to the Duke of Brittany. Moreover, a large number of the Savoyard nobles, while still remaining in Savoy, became pensioners of François or of Philip, and bore the French or Spanish colors; and ingratitude, like a canker, had eaten into the heart of the great, and indifference and neglect took possession of their inferiors.

Thus it was that gradually the Piedmontese towns grew accustomed to the presence of the French. The conquerors manifested great moderation; they imposed no more requisitions than were absolutely necessary, and they allowed every one to live in his own way, raising no local police. The greater part of the public offices being

purchasable, the magistrates, eager to realize what they had paid for their office, feebly repressed, or even omitted to repress, plundering, for which indeed they themselves set an example. On this subject the following passage is quoted from Brantôme : —

“In the time of Louis XI. and François I. there was in Italy neither king’s lieutenant, nor governor of province, who did not deserve, after being two or three years in his government, to be beheaded for his peculations and exactions. Milan was peaceably inclined toward us and secure, without the outrages and the acts of terrible injustice which were committed there, and we lost all.”

In consequence, all who remained attached to the government of the native princes were either ignored or oppressed ; since to remain attached to Emmanuel Philibert, commander of the allied Austrian, Flemish, and Spanish army, which fought against France, was naturally to regard the French occupation as oppressive and hostile.

The few days that Emmanuel spent in Nice were kept as days of festivity. Children seeing a father again after a long absence, a father meeting his children again whom he regarded as lost, could not express their joy and their love in a manner more tender. Then he deposited in the treasury of the fortress three hundred thousand gold crowns, for the purpose of repairing the ramparts of the town, and of building on the rocky crest which divides the harbor of Villa-franca from that of Limpia the castle of Montalban, which the Venetian ambassador Lipomano called, on account of its smallness, a model for a citadel. After that Emmanuel set out for Coni, — the town which, together with Nice, had remained the most faithful to him, and which, being without artillery, had manufactured guns at its own expense for its prince’s protection.

Emmanuel rewarded the town by quartering its arms on the white cross of Savoy, and by conferring on its inhabitants the right of calling themselves citizens instead of burghers.

Another cause of grave anxiety still remained. As France was troubled by Huguenots, which were rudely to shake the throne of François II. and Charles IX., so Emmanuel was vexed by reformers in the Piedmontese Alps. In 1535 Geneva adopted the Lutheran form of religion, and later became the principal seat of the disciples of Calvin; but as far back as the tenth century there had been an Israel in the Alps. Indeed, about the middle of the tenth century after Christ, which, according to tradition, was to be the end of the world, while half of this world shrieked with terror at the approach of the universal death-struggle, certain Christian families, belonging to the sect of the Paulicians, an offshoot of the Manichæans, of Eastern origin, had spread over Italy, where traces of them were later to be found under the name of *Paterini*, and had penetrated as far as the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and St. Martin. There, in the depths of those remote defiles, in the clefts of those rocks which they believed to be inaccessible, these European brothers of Tabor and Sinai had settled, and lived pure, simple, and unknown lives, their souls as free as the bird which cleaves the celestial blue, and their consciences as pure as the snow on the summit of Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc. The *Paterini* did not recognize any of the Reformers as the founders of their sect; they claimed to have preserved the doctrines of the Early Church in all their purity: they said that the ark of the covenant rested on the mountains where they dwelt, and while the Church of Rome was submerged by a deluge of errors, among them alone had the divine torch remained kindled.

And indeed this church, with its austere customs, its seamless robe, like that of Christ, had religiously conserved the spirit and the rites and customs of the primitive Christians. The Gospel was their law; and their religion, founded on that law, — the simplest of all human religions, — was the bond of a fraternal community, whose members gathered together only to pray and to love. Their crime — for to persecute them it had been found necessary to charge them with a crime — consisted in their maintaining that Constantine, in endowing the popes with wealth, had corrupted Christian society; and this charge they supported by two sayings of Christ himself. The first was, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;" the second, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." This crime had drawn upon them the rigors of an institution only recently established, known as the Inquisition.

For four centuries had these massacres by steel and fire endured, — for it was from this sect that the Albigenses in Languedoc, the Hussites in Bohemia, and the Vaudois in Apulia drew their origin, — but nothing had been of avail to diminish among them either hope or even the spirit of proselytism; their missionaries travelled ceaselessly, not only to visit nascent churches, but even to found new ones. Their principal apostles were Valdo of Lyons, from whom they had received the name of Vaudois, the famous Bérenger, Ludovico Pasquale, a Calabrian preacher, Giovanni de Lucerne, a Genoese, and, lastly, several brothers of the name of Molini, who were sent into Bohemia, Hungary, and Dalmatia.

The princes of Savoy saw at first in the Vaudois only an isolated colony, inoffensive, few in number, of gentle manners, and whose doctrines were pure. But when

Luther and Calvin appeared on the scene, and the Vaudois joined their followers, the Vaudois — a branch of the vast tree of the Reformation — ceased to be a mere sect in the Church, and became a party in the State.

During the unfortunate reign of Charles III. this sect had, as we have said, settled in the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and St. Martin; they had moreover gained a large number of partisans in the plains, and even in the towns of Piedmont, in Chieri, Avignon, and Turin, wherefore François I., ally of the Turks of Constantinople and of the German Protestants, had in 1534 issued orders to the senate of Turin rigorously to prosecute them, and enjoined on his military officers the duty of supporting the Inquisition, with the object of compelling the Vaudois either to attend Mass or to leave the country. This persecution continued under Henri II.

Thus the greatest excitement reigned in the valleys of the Vaudois when, on the 16th of November, Emmanuel Philibert arrived at Verceil, one of the castles where, as our readers will remember, he had passed his childhood.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SEVENTEENTH OF NOVEMBER.

ON the morning of the 17th of November a horseman enveloped in a long cloak dismounted at the door of a small house at Oleggio, and clasped in his arms a woman who from joy and happiness had nearly fainted. The horseman was Emmanuel Philibert; the lady was Leona.

Although scarcely five months had passed since Emmanuel had left Leona at Écouen, a great change had taken place in her, — a change like that which a flower would undergo if, accustomed to air and sun, it should suddenly be deprived of both; like what a bird would undergo if, a songster in the free air, he were suddenly imprisoned in a cage: the flower would lose its colors, the bird his song. Leona's cheeks had grown pale and her eye sad, and her voice had lost its gayety.

After the first moments devoted to the delight of reunion, the first words exchanged, with all the foolish prodigality of joy, Emmanuel regarded his beloved with an air of anxiety; the hand of grief had been laid on her visage, and had left its fatal impress.

Leona smiled in reply to the prince's inquiring look. "I see what you seek, my dear Emmanuel," said she: "you seek the page of the Duke of Savoy, your joyous companion of Nice and Hesdin, — you seek poor Leone."

Emmanuel sighed.

"He," continued the girl, with a sigh of profound melancholy, "is dead, and you will never see him more.

But his sister Leona is here in his stead, to whom he has bequeathed the love and devotion which he cherished for you."

"Oh! what matters?" cried Emmanuel. "It is Leona whom I love, — it is Leona whom I shall ever love."

"Love her, then, while you have the opportunity, and very tenderly," said the girl, with the same melancholy smile.

"Why do you say that?" Emmanuel asked her.

"My father died young," she replied, "my mother died young, and within a year I shall have reached my mother's age when she died."

Emmanuel, shuddering, pressed her to his breast; then he cried in a changed voice, —

"But why, Leona, do you tell me this?"

"There is nothing very terrible about death, my friend, now that I know that God permits the dead to watch over the living."

"I do not understand you, Leona," said Emmanuel, who began to be seriously alarmed at the look of profound sadness in the girl's face.

"How many hours can you give me, my beloved?" asked Leona.

"Oh, the whole day and all night! Is it not understood that you belong to me once every year for twenty-four hours?"

"Yes. Well, let us put off until to-morrow what I have to say to you. From now until then, my love, let us again live over the past." Then she added, with a sigh, "Alas! the past is my future;" and she made a sign to Emmanuel to follow her.

Having resided in the village of Oleggio but a short time, in that house which Emmanuel had bought, and of which she had made rather a tabernacle in which

to worship than furnished as a dwelling, she was still unknown to every one; and Emmanuel, who had not revisited Piedmont since his childhood, was an even greater stranger. The peasants therefore saw this handsome young man of scarce thirty, and this beautiful girl who seemed to be at the most twenty-five, pass through the village without suspecting that they were gazing at none other than the prince who held the happiness of Piedmont in his hands, and at her who held the heart of the prince in hers. Whither were they going? It was Leona who led Emmanuel. From time to time she would stop, and approaching a group, would say, —

“Listen, Emmanuel.”

Then she would ask the peasants, —

“My friends, what are you talking about?”

And they would reply, —

“Of what should we be talking, beautiful lady, but of the return of our prince to his dukedom?”

Then Emmanuel took part in the conversation.

“And what do you think of him?” he asked.

“What would you have us think of him?” the peasants replied. “We do not know him yet?”

“You know him by his renown, do you not?” said Leona.

“Yes, as a great soldier; but what do we care about great soldiers? Great soldiers, to keep up their reputations, make war; and war means barren fields, depopulated villages, and mourning for our wives and daughters.”

Leona gave Emmanuel a look full of entreaty.

“You hear?” she murmured.

“Now tell me, good people,” said Emmanuel, “what you desire of your prince?”

“We wish him to deliver us from the foreigner, and to bring back peace and justice.”

"In the name of the duke," then said Leona, "I promise you all that ; for Duke Emmanuel Philibert is not only, as you just said, a great soldier, but he has also a noble heart."

"If that is so," cried the peasants, "long live our young Duke Emmanuel Philibert !"

The prince clasped Leona to his breast ; for, like a modern Egeria, she revealed to this modern Numa the real wishes of his people.

"Oh," he said to her, "my dearly loved Leona, if I could only wander thus with you all through my dukedom !"

Leona smiled sadly.

"I shall be always with you," she murmured. Then she added, so low that only God and herself could hear it, "And hereafter much more than I am now."

Here they passed beyond the confines of the village.

"I should have liked, my love," said Leona, "to lead you whither we are about to go by a road strewn with flowers ; but, you see, heaven and earth both remember the anniversary which we celebrate to-day. The earth is sad and desolate, thus representing death ; the sun is bright and gentle, thus representing life. Death is transient, like winter ; life is eternal, like the sun. Do you recollect the place where you found life and death together ?"

Emmanuel Philibert looked round him and uttered a cry ; he recognized the spot where, twenty-five years before, he had found, near a brook, a dead woman and a child nearly dead.

"Ah ! this is the place, is it not ?" he cried.

"Yes," said Leona, smiling, "it was indeed here."

Emmanuel drew his poniard, cut a willow-branch, and planted it exactly on the spot where Leona's mother had lain.

"There," said he, "shall be erected a chapel to the *Mater Misericordia*."

"And also to the *Mater Dolorosa*," added Leona.

Then she began to gather by the brookside some late autumn flowers, while Emmanuel Philibert, grave and as in a revery, leaning against the willow a branch of which he had just cut, saw pass before him his whole life.

"Ah!" said he suddenly, drawing Leona toward him and straining her to his breast, "you have been the visible angel who along the rough paths which I have had to follow, has led me for twenty-five years from the point whence I set out to this spot to which I have returned."

"And I," said Leona, "I swear to you here, O my beloved, to continue in the spirit-world the mission which I have received from God in the world of men."

Emmanuel regarded Leona with the same anxiety which he had felt when she met him a few hours before. Her hand stretched forth, her face palely lit by the dying autumn sun, she seemed already much more like a shadow than a living creature. Emmanuel bowed his head and sighed deeply.

"Ah! at last you begin to understand me," said Leona. "No longer able to be with you, having no longer power to remain in this world, my desire now is to be with God."

"Leona, Leona!" Emmanuel cried, "this is not what you promised me at Brussels and at Écouen."

"Oh!" said Leona, "I will perform much more than I promised you, my beloved. I promised to see you and be with you once every year; and behold, I find that is no longer enough; and by dint of incessant prayer God has granted my desire soon to die, so that after my death I may never leave you."

Emmanuel shuddered as though, instead of the words which he had just heard, it had been the flapping of the wing of death itself.

"Die, die!" said he. "But do you know what there is beyond this life? Have you, like the Florentine, Dante, fathomed that great mystery of the tomb, thus to speak of dying?"

Leona smiled. "I have not been down into the tomb, like Dante," she said, "but an angel has come forth out of it and talked with me of life and death."

"*Mon Dieu*, Leona!" Emmanuel cried, gazing at the girl in a manner which betokened no slight fear, "are you in your right mind?"

Leona smiled; there was manifest in her the gentle and deep security of conviction.

"I have seen my mother," she said.

Emmanuel held her out at arm's length, and regarded her with more and more astonishment. "Your mother?" he cried.

"Yes, my mother," said Leona, with a calmness which caused a shudder to thrill through her lover's veins.

"And when was that?" asked Emmanuel.

"Last night."

"And where did you see her," continued the duke, "and at what hour?"

"At midnight, by my bedside."

"You say you *saw* her?" still continued Emmanuel.

"Yes," Leona replied.

"And she spoke to you?"

"She spoke to me."

The prince with one hand wiped the perspiration which stood on his brow, while with the other he clasped Leona to his breast, as if to make quite sure that it was a living being whom he held, and not a mere phantom.

"Oh, tell me that again, my dear child!" he asked; "tell me what you have seen, tell me what happened."

"First, then," said Leona, "since I left you, my beloved, I have every night dreamed of the two persons whom I love most in the world, — you and my mother."

"Leona!" said the prince, pressing his lips against the girl's forehead.

"My brother!" she replied, as though to give to the kiss which she received all the purity of a fraternal embrace.

The duke hesitated a moment; then he said, in a stifled voice, —

"Yes, my sister, well?"

"Thanks!" said Leona, with a divine smile. "Oh, now I am sure that I shall never leave you!" And she herself gave a second time her forehead to the prince to be kissed, who could not do other than press it with his lips.

"I am listening," said he.

"I told you just now, my beloved, that every night since the day we parted at Écouen I have dreamed of you and of my mother; but it was not only a dream, and last night I had the vision —"

"What do you mean? Continue!"

"I had fallen asleep, but was awakened by a touch as cold as ice, when I opened my eyes, and perceived a veiled woman dressed in white by my bedside, who had just kissed me on the forehead. As I was about to utter a cry, she lifted her veil, and I recognized my mother."

"Leona! Leona! do you really mean what you say?"

Leona smiled. "I opened my arms as though to embrace her," she resumed; "but she shook her head, and they fell as if lifeless. I seemed fettered to the bed, and you would have said that my eyes alone were alive;

they were fixed on the phantom, and my mouth murmured, 'My mother!' "

Emmanuel started.

"Oh! I was not afraid; I felt quite happy."

"And you say, Leona, that the phantom spoke to you?"

"Yes. 'My daughter,' it said, 'this is not the first time that God has permitted me to see you since my death; indeed you must often have felt me near you, for I have often come to you, gliding between the curtains, as at this moment, that I might watch you asleep. But this is the last time that God allows me to speak to you.' 'Speak, my mother,' I replied; 'I am listening.' — 'My daughter,' continued the spirit, 'for the sake of the white cross of Savoy, for which you have sacrificed your love, God not only pardons you, but he even grants that whenever a great danger threatens the duke, you shall warn him of it.' "

The duke regarded Leona with some misgiving.

"'To-morrow, when the duke comes to visit you, you will tell him with what sacred mission Our Lord intrusts you; then, as he will be mistrustful —' for the spirit anticipated your misgivings, my love."

"Indeed, Leona," Emmanuel replied, "what you now tell me is so extraordinary that it is not strange if I do mistrust."

"'Then, as he will be mistrustful,' continued the spirit, 'you will tell him that when a bird shall come and alight on the willow-branch which he will have cut, and shall sing, — namely, on the 17th of November, at three o'clock in the afternoon, — at that very moment Scianca-Ferro will arrive at Verceil, bringing a letter from the Princess Marguerite. Then Emmanuel will be compelled to believe.' And the spirit drew the veil over her face as she mur-

mured, 'Adieu, my daughter! You will see me again when the time comes.' At that moment the spirit vanished."

Scarcely had Leona ceased speaking when an unknown bird, which seemed to fall from the sky, alighted on the willow branch which the duke had just cut and planted, and began sweetly to sing.

Leona smiled. "You see, my dear Duke," said she, "at this moment Scianca-Ferro is entering the courtyard at Verceil, where you will find him to-morrow."

"In very truth," said Emmanuel, "if what you tell me is true, Leona, it will be a miracle."

"And will you believe me then?"

"Yes."

"Will you, as occasion offers, do what I tell you?"

"It would be sacrilege not to obey you, Leona; for you would come from God!"

"That is all that I have to say to you, my friend. Let us now go back to the house."

"Poor child!" murmured the duke, "it is not strange that you are so pale, since you have been kissed by the dead!"

On the next day, when he reached the castle at Verceil, Emmanuel Philibert found Scianca-Ferro awaiting him. The bold squire on the previous day had ridden into the courtyard as the hour of three struck; he bore a letter from the duchess!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DEAD KNOW ALL THINGS.

IN addition to the letter from the Princess Marguerite, Scianca-Ferro brought with him three hundred thousand crowns. The Maréchal de Bourdillon, who doubtless only carried out the secret orders of the Duc de Guise, refused to evacuate the fortresses which he held until his troops received all arrears of pay. Seeing that the French did not push forward the evacuation of Piedmont as rapidly as they had pledged themselves to do, Emmanuel Philibert had written to King François II., intrusting the letter to the princess for transmission to her nephew. François, inspired by the Guises, said in reply that the troops were unwilling to leave Piedmont until a hundred thousand crowns should be divided among them, which was the sum due them.

“Now,” said the good Princess Marguerite, “as it is unquestionably the duty of France, and not yours, to pay French soldiers, I send you, my dear lord and master, this sum of a hundred thousand crowns, which I have raised from the sale of my maiden jewels, which in great part were the gifts of my father, François I.; so that, as you see, it is, after all, France who will pay, and not you.”

The French troops were thereupon paid, and every fortified town in the dominions of the Duke of Savoy was evacuated, with the exception of Turin, Chivas, Chiri, and Villa Nuova d’Asti. Then Emmanuel returned to Nice with Scianca-Ferro, who did not stay there, but re-

turned immediately to Paris, to resume his duties in the establishment of the Princess Marguerite. It was determined that the princess should not enter the dominions of her husband until all traces of the previous misrule had disappeared. Perhaps, on account of his love for Leona, the duke was a little ungrateful to the beautiful princess, and did not use all the diligence to see her again which her fidelity deserved. He nevertheless proceeded completely to reorganize his dominions, and began by making due allowances for the fidelity which had been manifested toward him, as well as the forgetfulness and ingratitude. A large number of his subjects had taken sides with the French; a smaller number kept themselves aloof, remaining passively faithful to the duke; while, lastly, a few had remained constant to him in evil fortune, and had taken an active part in his interest. These last he hastened to advance, honoring them, and putting them into office; he pardoned the weakness and lukewarmness of the second, and received them cordially, even taking them into his service as occasion served; while as to the first, he let them severely alone, taking care especially that they should not be employed in the public service, saying, —

“It could not be expected that I should put any trust in them in my prosperity, since they deserted me in adversity.”

Then he remembered that the peasants of Oleggio had desired magistrates who would render justice, and who should not be venal or corrupt; he therefore appointed at the head of the judiciary Thomas de Langusque, Comte de Stropiane, a jurist renowned both for his probity and his profound knowledge of the law. Moreover, two chambers took the place of the former councils of justice and the parliaments established during the French occu-

pation. On the western slope of the Alps about this period the following proverb was current : "God preserve us from parliament justice !" and this proverb — like Hannibal and Charlemagne, and, later, Napoleon — crossed from the western to the eastern Alps.

It was, however, a much longer task to establish peace than justice. We have already spoken of two causes of war — territorial and religious — which were not absent even from Savoy. *Territorial war* was with the Helvetian Confederation, which had seized Vaud, and the counties of Romont, Gex, and Châblais. Emmanuel Philibert consented to yield to the Bernese the whole right bank of the Lake of Geneva on condition that Châblais, Gex, and the bailiwicks of Ternier and Gaillard were given up to him ; and peace was eventually concluded on that basis. The *religious war* was with the Reformers in the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and St. Martin. Our readers know that in joining hands with the Calvinists of Geneva and the Lutherans of Germany these schismatics had become a power by no means to be despised. Emmanuel Philibert sent against them the Bâtard d'Achaie, who invaded their valleys with an army of four or five thousand men, — a force which was regarded as ample for the reduction of a people unskilled in the use of arms, and who had no other means of defence but agricultural implements ; but everything serves as a weapon for him who is ready to fight for his soul's and his body's liberty. Women, old men, and children were first of all concealed in caverns in the mountains. Then, with the gunpowder supplied by their co-religionists at Geneva, as soon as it was seen that the invasion was determined on, mines were dug under the rocks along the pathways which the Catholics had to traverse. Scarcely had the enemy penetrated the defiles when thunder more terrible than that of

heaven was heard above their heads, and a bolt fell at every flash. The mountains trembled under these shocks, and the rocks, suddenly torn from their bases, seemed at first to mount to the skies, then fell, sometimes entire, sometimes in splinters, and rolled down the sides of the mountains in avalanches of granite, overwhelming whole companies of men, who when they sought their adversaries saw only frightened eagles scurrying across the sky.

This terrible war lasted nearly a year; at length, Vaudois and Catholics becoming thoroughly weary, a truce was agreed on, and peace proposals considered. It is not improbable that Emmanuel had given a pledge to the Guises and to Philip of Spain that he would exterminate heresy; but having sent an army and manifested, as he thought, sufficient diligence, he was anxious for peace himself. His sympathies were neither with the former, who burned men at the stake on La Grève, and who brought about the terrible massacre of St. Bartholomew, nor with the latter, who erected scaffolds at Brussels, Antwerp, and Ghent.

As a result of the deliberations, on the agreement of the Vaudois temporarily to banish their most violent *barbas*, — the name given by the mountaineers to their priests on account of their long beards, — full liberty of worship in the places where from time immemorial they had enjoyed it was in return accorded them. As, however, there was also a Catholic population in the valleys, and, though inferior in number, they desired liberty of worship, it was agreed that in each valley two villages should be named in which High Mass should be celebrated. When peace was concluded, the priests bade adieu to their families; and lest they should rouse indignation in the breasts of the peoples among whom they were to sojourn as exiles, they adopted the dress of herds-

men and muleteers before they set off. After their departure, Emmanuel caused strong forts to be erected at the entrances to the valleys, — De la Peyrouse, Du Villars, and De la Tour.

After the complete pacification of his dukedom had been accomplished he wrote to the duchess to join him at Nice; then, as it was the 12th of November, 1560, he repaired to his castle of Verceil, and on the morning of the 17th arrived at Oleggio, thus making his second visit to Leona since his marriage.

As on his previous visit, his beloved awaited him at the door of her little house. In these two hearts, this chaste love, there was a communion of thought so perfect that Emmanuel had no thought of failing at the trysting-place, nor Leona any that he could possibly fail. As soon as Emmanuel saw Leona awaiting him, though he was still a long way off, he galloped up to the house and dismounted; but he trembled when he remarked that she was paler than before, and that the shadow of the tomb seemed to lie still more darkly over her. She appeared to have even anticipated the effect she would produce on her lover, and wore a veil. On seeing her, Emmanuel started; she seemed herself to be that veiled shadow whose apparition she had told him of during his last visit to Oleggio. While silent tears fell from his eyes, he raised her veil with a trembling hand. Leona's skin had taken on the whiteness of Paros marble, her gaze seemed like a flame on the point of extinction, and her voice a breath about to cease; it was evidently an effort for her to keep alive. A slight blush spread over the cheeks of the girl at the sight of her beloved duke. Every pulsation of her heart said, "I love you!"

A collation had been prepared, but Leona did not taste it; she seemed already rapt from worldly wants and

weaknesses. After the meal was over she took Emmanuel's arm, and both recommenced the walk through the village which they had taken the year before. This time groups of discontented peasants were no longer to be seen in the village questioning one another in regard to the qualities or defects of their duke; a year had passed, and during this year they had learned his true character. With the exception of the war with the Vaudois, confined within the three valleys, no echo of which had been heard beyond them, peace had produced its natural fruits; the French garrisons had been withdrawn from the towns which for twenty-three years they had pillaged, and justice was impartially rendered to gentle and simple alike. Thus every one was employed, — the laborer in the fields, the mechanic in his workshop. Everywhere blessings were called down on the head of the duke; and but one wish was universally expressed, — that the Princess Marguerite should soon be the mother of an heir to the throne of Savoy. But every time that this desire was voiced, Emmanuel started, and looked anxiously at Leona, who smiled, and answered for the duke, —

“God, who has restored our sovereign prince to us, will not abandon Savoy.”

When they reached the confines of the village, Leona took the road which they had taken the year before, and in a quarter of an hour they arrived before the little chapel which stood where the duke had, on his last visit, planted the willow-branch, and on which the unknown bird had sung his sweet melody. The chapel was small, in the style of the sixteenth century, and of elegant and slender form; it was built entirely of the beautiful rose granite which is quarried in the mountains of Tessin. In a golden niche a silver Virgin held forth to the passers-by her divine Son, who with his right hand

stretched out, gave them his blessing. At sight of the divine image Emmanuel, devout as a Crusader, knelt and prayed. While Emmanuel was prostrate before the Virgin and Child, Leona stood near him, her head leaning on her hand; then when he rose, she said, —

“My dear Duke, you promised me, — nay, you even swore, — a year ago, on this very spot, that if on your return to Verceil you should find, as I predicted to you, that Scianca-Ferro had brought a letter from the Princess Marguerite, you would thenceforth believe everything that I should tell you, however improbable what I said should be, and that you would follow my counsel, however strange it should seem to you.”

“Yes, I promised that,” said the duke; “don’t be uneasy, I shall not forget it.”

“Was Scianca-Ferro at Verceil?”

“Yes, he was there.”

“Did he arrive at the time I anticipated?”

“As the hour of three struck, he entered the courtyard.”

“Was he the bearer of a letter from the Princess Marguerite?”

“That letter was the first thing he gave me when he saw me.”

“You are ready, then, to follow my advice without hesitation?”

“I believe, Leona, when you speak to me that it is the same Virgin before whose image I have just prayed, who speaks to me by your mouth.”

“Well, then listen. I have seen my mother again.”

Emmanuel started, as he had done when, a year before, Leona uttered the same words.

“And when was that?” he inquired.

“Last night.”

"And what did she say to you?" asked the duke, in spite of himself beginning to mistrust.

"See!" said Leona; "now you are mistrustful."

"No," said the duke.

"This time, then, I shall begin by giving you proof."

Emmanuel was all attention.

"Before setting out for Verceil you wrote to the Princess Marguerite to rejoin you."

"That is true," Emmanuel answered, with some astonishment.

"In your letter you told her that you would wait for her at Nice, whither she was to travel by sea from Marseilles."

"How do you know that?" the duke inquired.

"In addition, you said that you would take her to Genoa, following the coast by San Remo and Albenga."

"*Mon Dieu!*" murmured Emmanuel.

"Afterward, that together you would go thence by way of the beautiful valley of La Bormida, through Cherasco and Asti, to Turin."

"That is true, Leona; but no one save myself knows the contents of that letter; and I entrusted it to a courier of whose fidelity I am absolutely sure —"

Leona smiled. "Did I not tell you," she said, "that last night I saw my mother?"

"Well?"

"The dead know all things, Emmanuel."

The duke, a prey to involuntary terror, drew his handkerchief across his forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

"I must believe you," he said in a low voice. "And what then?"

"My dear Emmanuel, this is what my mother told me: 'You will see the duke to-morrow, and urge him to set

out during the night with the Princess Marguerite by Tenda and Coni, and to send by the sea route an empty litter, escorted by Scianca-Ferro and a hundred men-at-arms.' ”

Emmanuel looked at Leona inquiringly.

“ ‘The Duke of Savoy’s safety depends on this plan being carried out.’ Now you know what my mother told me, Emmanuel ; and this is what I say to you : You have promised — nay, more, sworn — to follow my advice : swear to me, then, that you will go through Tenda and Coni with the duchess, while Scianca-Ferro, with a hundred men-at-arms and an empty litter, shall follow the coast.”

The duke hesitated a moment ; his reason as a man, his pride as a soldier, struggled against the promise which he had made, — his pledged word.

“ Emmanuel,” murmured Leona, sadly shaking her head, “ who knows ? Perhaps this is the last request that I shall ever make of you.”

Emmanuel stretched forth his hand toward the chapel and swore.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ROUTE FROM SAN REMO TO ALBENGA.

EMMANUEL PHILIBERT had two reasons for meeting his duchess at Nice, — first, he wished to reward his faithful capital with another instance of his bounty ; and second, as the journey of the princess was to be made in the month of January, he wished to show her his dukedom when Nature wore her sweetest smile, during the eternal spring-time of Nice and Oneglia. The princess indeed arrived about the 15th of that month, and landed from the harbor of Villa Franca ; she had been delayed by the fêtes given in honor of her visit to Marseilles. Since she was the aunt of King Charles IX., who then reigned over France, and also Duchess of Savoy, the old Phocian city paid honor to her in that double capacity, and the festivals were joyously celebrated.

The duke and duchess remained two months at Nice, during which time the duke busied himself in hastening the construction of some galleys which he had ordered. A Calabrian corsair named Occhiati, a renegade Christian who had renounced the religion of his native land for the creed of Mahomet, had recently made incursions in the island of Corsica and on the shores of Tuscany, and it was even said that a suspicious vessel had been seen in Genoese waters.

At length, about the beginning of March, with the first breath of that mild Italian spring which breathes so gently over weary breasts, Emmanuel determined to set out. The

route to be taken was known beforehand: the royal train was to follow by the banks of what was known as the River of Genoa, that is to say, the sea-coast. The duke and the duchess — he on horseback, she in a litter — passed through San Remo and Albenga, where relays of horses were prepared beforehand.

The departure was fixed for the 15th of March. At the break of day the ducal train left the castle at Nice; the duke, on horseback, as we have already informed our readers, his visor down, armed as though for war, kept close to the litter, whose curtains were closed. Fifty men-at-arms preceded the litter, and fifty followed behind. The first night a stop was made at San Remo, but early the next morning the journey was resumed. At Oneglia a halt was made for refreshment; but the duchess was unwilling to leave the litter, and the duke himself brought her bread, wine, and some fruits. The duke ate without divesting himself of any of his armor; he simply raised the visor of his helmet.

Toward midday the cavalcade and the litter resumed the journey. A little beyond Porto Maurisio the road winds between two lofty mountains, the sea is no longer in sight, and the traveller finds himself in a narrow defile bristling with rocks to left and right, — the exact spot for an ambuscade were one intended. The duke sent twenty men forward: it seemed an excessive precaution, for in that peaceful time what could there possibly be to fear? Wherefore the twenty men passed to the front without any misgivings, and the rest of the troop fearlessly entered the defile. But just as the duke, who never left the side of the litter, entered the defile in his turn, the sound of a terrible arquebusade was heard, aimed especially at the duke and the litter; the duke's horse was wounded, one of the horses attached to the litter fell

dead, and a feeble moan passed like a breath through the curtains of the litter. Immediately savage cries were heard, and the ducal train was furiously attacked by a band of men in Moorish costumes. They had fallen into an ambuscade of pirates.

The duke was on the point of running to the litter when one of the assailants, mounted on a superb Arabian horse, and clad in a suit of Turkish mail, rushed directly at him, crying, —

“Here, Duke Emmanuel, this time you shall not escape me !”

“Oh ! nor you either,” the duke replied. Then, rising in his stirrups, and waving his sword above his head, he cried, “Now, men, do your very best ; and I will try and set you an example.” Hereupon the struggle became general. But instead of busying ourselves with giving an account of the *mêlée*, we shall confine ourselves to relating the fortunes of the two chiefs.

Duke Emmanuel's skill in this deadly game of war was well known, and few could cope with him in it ; but this time he had found a foeman worthy of his steel. At first each of the combatants had discharged the pistol which each held in his right hand : the pirate's ball glanced off the armor of the duke, and the latter's was flattened against that of the corsair. Then the fight, of which this was only the prelude, was continued with swords.

Though the corsair was clad in a Turkish coat of mail, his arms were European. In his hand he had a long straight sword, and at his saddle-bow a battle-axe with flexible handle and edge as keen as a razor's. These axes, whose handles were made of rhinoceros hide mounted with small steel plates in consequence of their flexibility could be used with terrible effect. The duke had his sword and mace, — his usual weapons ; he was a master of both.

Two or three of the duke's followers wished to render him assistance ; but he sent them away, crying, "Look out for yourselves ; with God's help I will finish this myself." And indeed with God's help he fought with marvellous skill.

It was clear that the pirates had not expected to find so strong an escort, and that their leader — he who had attacked the duke — hoped to take them at a greater disadvantage ; nevertheless, though deceived in regard to his adversaries' strength, he did not recoil one step. Those who watched the fight felt that in the terrible blows which he dealt the duke there was hatred more terrible even than they ; but finely tempered as was the corsair's sword, it had very little effect on the Milanese armor of the duke, just as the damascene coat of mail of the pirate blunted the duke's blade.

In the midst of this deadly struggle the duke felt that his wounded horse was growing weaker, and would soon fall ; he therefore exerted all his strength for one terrible blow, and the sword gleamed on high. The corsair comprehending the danger with which he was threatened, drew backward, and as he did so he caused his horse to rear ; consequently the latter received the blow. This time the chanfron of the horse, less finely tempered than his rider's armor, was cut through, and the horse, struck between the ears, fell on his knees.

The Moor thought that his horse was killed ; he therefore slipped off as the duke's horse fell, and the two combatants at the same time leaped to their feet. Each ran to the saddle-bow of his fallen steed, — the one for his battle-axe, the other for his mace. Then, as if each judged the arm which he had just grasped deadly enough, the warriors threw their swords away, and the corsair stood armed with his axe, the duke with his mace.

Such terrible blows were never struck even by the Cyclops in the caverns of Etna when forging the thunderbolts of Jove on the anvil of Vulcan; the beholders felt that Death himself, king of battle, arrested his flight and hovered above these two men, assured that he would ultimately carry off one of them, who should have entered on his eternal sleep. In a very short time the advantage seemed to be with the duke. His adversary's axe had piece by piece cut away the crown on his helmet; but it was evident that the steel points of the mace had inflicted terrible bruises under the Turkish mail. Moreover, as the strength of the duke seemed inexhaustible, that of the corsair seemed, on the contrary, to begin to fail; his breast heaved; his blows grew less rapid and vigorous; his arm, notwithstanding his hatred, showed signs of weakness. The duke, on the other hand, appeared to gather fresh energy with every blow.

And now the pirate began to recede, — step by step, almost imperceptibly, but nevertheless he did recede. As he recoiled, he drew near to the edge of a precipice; only, busied as he was with parrying and delivering those terrible blows, he did not notice how near the abyss he approached. Both combatants, the one receding, the other following, thus arrived at the ledge of rock which overhung the precipice; two steps more, and the corsair would fall headlong into it. But nevertheless he wished to reach the precipice, for suddenly, throwing away his axe, and seizing his adversary round the waist, he cried, "Ah! Duke Emmanuel, I have you at last! We will now die together!" And with a jerk strong enough to uproot an oak, he raised his enemy in his arms.

But a terrible burst of laughter was the response to this speech.

"I knew it was you, bastard of Waldeck," said his

adversary, loosening the iron chain of his arms. Then, raising his visor, he added, "I am not Duke Emmanuel; and you will not have the honor of falling by his hand."

"Scianca-Ferro!" cried the bastard of Waldeck. "Ah! malediction on you and your duke!" And he stooped to recover his axe and begin the struggle again; but as he made the movement, rapid as it was, Scianca-Ferro's mace, heavy as the rock on which the combatants stood, came down with terrible force on the back of the renegade's head. The bastard of Waldeck heaved a sigh and fell motionless.

"Ah!" cried Scianca-Ferro, "you are not here this time, Brother Emmanuel, to prevent my destroying this viper!" And as during the combat his poniard had fallen from its sheath, he picked up a huge rock, and raising it in his arms with the strength of one of those Titans who piled Pelion upon Ossa, he shattered his enemy's helmet, and with it his skull. Then with a burst of laughter even more terrible than the first, he cried, —

"What gives me more delight than anything else, bastard of Waldeck, is that, dying in the armor of an infidel, you are damned like a dog!" Then, remembering the groan that he had heard in the litter, he ran to it and opened the curtains.

When the pirates saw the fall of their leader they fled in every direction.

Meantime Emmanuel and the Princess Marguerite quietly followed the road from Tenda to Coni. They arrived at the latter town nearly at the same time that the terrible fight took place, between San Remo and Albenga, which we have just related. Emmanuel felt anxious. What could have been Leona's reason for in-

sisting that he should change his route? What danger would he have run by following the road by the shore? And if there had been danger would not Scianca-Ferro be necessarily exposed to it? Who had informed Scianca-Ferro of the promise made by him, Emmanuel, to Leona? And how was it that at the moment he was about to speak to Scianca-Ferro of his change of route, the latter had come to him and spoken of it first?

The supper was anything but gay. The princess was tired, and Emmanuel took advantage of his need of rest, and about ten o'clock retired to his apartment. It seemed to him that every moment some messenger must arrive with bad news. He set a man at the door to watch, and another in the antechamber, so that he might be awakened any hour of the night; and if anything should happen, he directed that he should be immediately informed of it.

Eleven o'clock struck, and Emmanuel opened his window; the stars shone, and the air was calm and pure. A bird was singing in a thicket of pomegranates, and it seemed to the duke that it was the same bird whose song he had heard at Oleggio. At the end of half an hour he closed the window, and went and sat, his head in his hands, at his table, which was covered with papers. Gradually his eyes grew dim, his eyelids heavy; he heard indistinctly the first strokes of midnight; then it seemed to him, as through a cloud, as if he saw the door of his room open, and something approach which resembled a shadow. The shadow drew near him, leaned over him, and murmured his name. At that moment he felt something as cold as ice pressed against his forehead, and he shuddered all over; this feeling broke the invisible bonds which bound him.

"Leona, Leona!" he cried.

It was indeed Leona who was with him; but this time

there was no breath issuing from her lips, no sparkle in her eyes; some drops of pale blood fell from a wound she had received in the breast.

"Leona, Leona!" repeated the duke; and he held out his arms to embrace the shadow; but it made a sign, and the prince's arms fell to his side.

"I told you, my Emmanuel," murmured the shadow, in a voice as gentle as a breath and sweet as perfume, "I told you that I should be nearer you when dead than when alive."

"Why have you left me, Leona?" asked Emmanuel, feeling his heart melt into sobs.

"Because, my beloved, my mission on earth was fulfilled," the shadow replied; "but before I ascend again to heaven, God permits me to tell you that the desire of your people is fulfilled."

"What desire?"

"The Princess Marguerite is pregnant, and will have a son."

"Leona, Leona," cried the prince, "who has initiated you into the mystery of maternity?"

"The dead know all things!" murmured Leona; and as it vanished in vapor, the phantom said, in a voice scarcely audible, "Until we meet again in heaven!" And it disappeared.

The duke, who seemed as though tied to his chair as long as the shadow was at his side, rose and hurried to the door, and learned that the valet on guard had seen no one either enter or leave the room.

"Leona, Leona!" cried Emmanuel, "shall I see you again?"

And it seemed to him that a hardly perceptible breath murmured, "Yes."

On the next day the duke, instead of resuming his
VOL. II. — 22

journey, remained at Coni; he felt sure that he should hear tidings; and indeed, about two o'clock in the afternoon, Scianca-Ferro arrived.

"Is Leona dead?" was the first question with which Emmanuel greeted him.

"Yesterday at midnight," replied Scianca-Ferro; "but how do you know it?"

"Of a wound in the breast?" continued Emmanuel.

"From a ball intended for the duchess," said Scianca-Ferro.

"And who," cried the duke, "is the wretch who would attempt the life of a woman?"

"Waldeck's bastard," Scianca-Ferro replied.

"Oh," said the duke, "if he should ever fall into my hands!"

"I swore to you, Emmanuel, the first time that I should meet the serpent I would crush him."

"Well?"

"I *have* crushed him!"

"There is nothing left, then, but to pray for Leona," said Emmanuel Philibert.

"It is not for us to pray for angels," Scianca-Ferro replied; "it is for angels to pray for us!"

On the 12th of January, 1562, as Leona had foretold, the Princess Marguerite was happily delivered at the Château de Rivoli of a prince, who received the name of Charles Emmanuel, and who reigned fifty years. Three months after the birth of the young prince the French, according to the terms of the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, evacuated Turin, Chieri, Chivas, and Villa Nuova d'Asti, as they had already evacuated the rest of Piedmont.

CHAPTER XXI.

EPILOGUE.

ON a beautiful morning in the beginning of September, 1580, — that is to say, about twenty years after the events which we have just narrated, — about twenty of the noblemen who were called *Ordinaires* of King Henri III., and whose full number was forty-five, waited, in the grand courtyard of the Louvre, until the king, on his way to Mass, should command their attendance, whether they were willing or not, to receive the sacrament; for one of the peculiarities of Henri III. was to show anxiety not only for his own soul, but also for the souls of other men; and as, fifty years later, Louis XIV. used to say to his favorites, "Come and be bored with me," so Henri III. used to say to his, "Come and let us seek salvation together."

The life which the *Ordinaires*, or the Forty-five — they were known indifferently by both names — led was not marked by much that could be called recreation; the rule of the Louvre was almost as severe as that of a convent, and the king, relying on the fact that Saint-Mégrin, Bussy d'Amboise, and two or three other noblemen had recently died in consequence of their too great love for the fair sex, was unsparing in his invectives against women, and took advantage of every opportunity to represent them to his favorites as inferior beings, and even dangerous. The poor courtiers were thus reduced — those at least who wished to keep in the king's good graces —

to occupy themselves in fencing, playing foot-ball, shooting sparrows with air-guns, curling their hair, inventing new kinds of collars, telling their beads, and even flogging themselves if in the midst of this innocent life the devil — who respects no one, least of all saints — should lead them into temptation.

With this explanation of the state of affairs at the Louvre, our readers will not be surprised when they hear that one of the Forty-five, seeing an old fellow who had only one arm, one eye, and one leg, asking for alms of a trooper at the gate of the courtyard, signalled to him to enter; and after giving him a coin and asking him some questions, with that inborn curiosity which is found in an equal degree among scholars confined within the walls of a school, religious within a convent, and soldiers behind the walls of a fortress, forthwith called his comrades.

The young courtiers ran up, and surrounding the newcomer, examined him critically. Let us hasten to say that the person who had the honor of thus attracting so much attention was well deserving of it. He was a man, of about sixty, but who did not appear old, when his peculiar physical disabilities, and the adventurous life which he seemed to have led are borne in mind. Besides having only one eye, one arm, and one leg, the mendicant's face was scarred all over by sword-cuts, the fingers of his remaining hand were broken by pistol-balls, and his head was patched in several places with pieces of tin. His nose was so covered with cuts, and indeed of wounds of every description, that he resembled one of those baker's tallies on which a notch is made every time that a loaf of bread is bought on credit.

An object of such repeated attacks, it will easily be believed, was a curiosity for the young courtiers, who,

for lack of methods of spending their time to better advantage, regarded duelling as one of their principal means of distraction. Wherefore questions fell on the old beggar as thick as hail : "What is your name ?" "How old are you ?" "In what low pot-house did you lose your eye ?" "In what ambuscade have you left your arm ?" "On what field did you forget your leg ?"

"Come, gentlemen," said one of the questioners, "let us bring a little order into our questions, or the poor fellow won't be able to answer them all."

"But first we must find out whether he has n't lost his tongue also."

"No, thank God, brave gentlemen, I have still my tongue ; and if you will be pleased to bestow your bounty on a poor old captain of adventurers, I will use it to sing your praises."

"You a captain ! Come," said one of the young men, "you are not going to try to make us believe that you have been a captain ?"

"It is, at least, the title which François de Guise gave me more than once, when I assisted in the recapture of Calais ; and Gaspard de Coligny, with whom I was at the siege of St. Quentin, and the Prince de Condé, whom I helped to retake Orléans, also honored me with it."

"Do you mean to say that you have seen those illustrious captains ?" asked one of the courtiers.

"I have seen them, and spoken to them, and they to me. Ah ! my lords, you are, doubtless, good and true men ; but let me tell you that the race of the valiant and the strong has disappeared."

"And you, of course, are the last ?" said a voice.

"Not of those whom I have mentioned," continued the mendicant, "but indeed the last of a company of brave — You see, my lords, we were ten adventurers with whom

a captain could venture anything; but death has taken and carried us off one by one."

"And what," asked one of the Forty-five, "were the names — I will not say of the adventures, but of these ten heroes?"

"You do well not to question me in regard to their adventures, — they alone would form the worthy subject of a poem; and he who could have written it, poor Fracasso, unfortunately died of a contraction of the throat; but as to their names, that is another matter."

"Come, give us their names!"

"There was Dominico Ferrante; he was the first to depart. One evening, as he was passing with two companions by the Tour de Nesle, the idea occurred to him to offer to help an infernal Florentine sculptor named Benvenuto Cellini to carry a bag of silver which the latter had just received from the hands of the treasurer of François I. Benvenuto, who chanced to be out late, and who that very moment was expecting to hear the clock of St. Germain-des-Près strike the hour of midnight, believed what was really only a polite offer of assistance to be a temptation suggested by cupidity. He drew his sword, and with a rapid movement pinned poor Ferrante to the wall."

"See what it is to be too obliging!" said some of the auditors to one another.

"The second was Vittorio Albani Fracasso, a great poet, who could only compose by moonlight. One evening, while he was seeking a rhyme in the neighborhood of St. Quentin, he fell by chance into an ambush which had been set on the road by which Duke Emmanuel Philibert was expected. Fracasso was so preoccupied with trying to overcome the difficulty attaching to this rhyme that he forgot to ask the men who had set the ambush what

was their object in being there ; so that when, in due time, Emmanuel Philibert arrived, Fracasso found himself in the midst of the hubbub. He was doing his best to get out of the scrape when he fell, stunned by a blow from the mace of the duke's squire, an infernal fellow named Scianca-Ferro. Now, the ambush having failed in accomplishing the object for which it was set, Fracasso lay on the field ; and as, in consequence of the stupor into which he had fallen, he could not account for the fact of his presence there, a cord was slipped round his neck and he was strung up to an oak-branch. Though poor Fracasso in his capacity as poet was as thin as a goat-sucker, the weight of his body nevertheless brought about tightening of a running knot, and the tightening of the running knot brought about strangulation. Just at that moment he came to, and wanted to give the explanations which he believed necessary to his honor, greatly in discredit ; but consciousness returned just too late : he could not get his explanations out, and they remained the other side of the running knot, — which made many believe that the poor innocent was justly hanged."

"Gentlemen," said a voice, "five *Paters* and five *Aves* for the unfortunate Fracasso !"

"The third," continued the beggar, in a melancholy voice, "was a worthy German adventurer named Frantz Scharfenstein. You will assuredly have heard of Briareus and Hercules ? Well, Frantz combined the strength of Hercules with the stature of Briareus. He fell bravely before a breach at the siege of St. Quentin. God received his soul and that of his uncle, Heinrich Scharfenstein, who died insane through weeping for him."

"Say, Montaigu," interrupted a voice, "do you think that if you died, your uncle would become insane from weeping for you ?"

"My dear fellow," the courtier to whom the question was addressed replied, "there is a legal maxim which says, *Non bis in idem*."

"The fifth," continued the mendicant, "was a good Catholic named Cyrille Néopomucène Lactance. He is assured of his salvation ; for after having fought for twenty years for our holy religion, he died a martyr — "

"Martyr ! *Peste !* tell us about that."

"There is no difficulty about it, gentlemen. He was serving under the commands of the famous Baron des Adrets, who at that time was a Catholic. You are doubtless aware that Baron des Adrets spent his life in changing his religion ; first he would turn Catholic, and then back again to Protestantism. Now it chanced at this time, as I said, the baron was a good Catholic, and Lactance was in his service ; and on the day before Corpus Christi, the baron having taken some Huguenots prisoners, and being in doubt as to the best mode of putting them to death, the brilliant idea occurred to Lactance of flaying them and using their skins instead of tapestry in the houses of the little village of Mornas. The idea greatly pleased the baron, and the next day he executed it, to the great glory of our holy religion. But it chanced that the year after on the very day, — the baron having in the mean time turned Protestant, and Lactance fallen into his hands — the baron remembered the advice which my pious friend had given him, and notwithstanding his protestations, Lactance in his turn underwent the same operation. I recognized his skin by a beauty-spot just below his left shoulder."

"Perhaps some day, Villequier," said one of the courtiers to his neighbor, "that will be your fate ; but if you should be flayed alive, it won't be for the purpose of making hangings of your skin, or, *mordieu*,

there will then be in France an enormous number of drums."

"The sixth," continued the adventurer, "was a handsome young spark born in our good city of Paris, — young, gallant, always running after women —"

"Hush!" said one of the *Ordinaires*; "do not speak so loud, my good fellow! King Henri might hear you, and then he would have you whipped for having been in such bad company!"

"And what was the name of the rogue who answered to your description?" asked another courtier.

"His name was Victor Felix Yvonnet," the mendicant replied. "One day, or rather one night, he was at the house of a mistress whose husband, though mad with jealousy, lacked courage boldly to wait for him and attack him sword in hand; he therefore took the door by which Yvonnet was to leave the house off its hinges, — a massive oak one, — and swung it over them. About three o'clock in the morning Yvonnet bade adieu to his sweetheart, and went straight to the door, to which he had a key. He put the key in the lock, made two turns, pulled it out, and drew the door to after him; but instead of turning on its hinges, the door fell with all its weight on poor Yvonnet. If it had been Frantz or Heinrich Scharfenstein, either would have thrust it aside like a piece of paper; but Yvonnet was, as I said, a veritable little fop, with small hands and feet. The door broke his back, and in the morning he was picked up dead."

"Ah!" said the courtier who had been addressed as Montaigu, "there's a hint for Monsieur de Châteauneuf. It may not prevent his being deceived, but it may save him from being taken in twice by the same person."

"The seventh," continued the adventurer, "was called Martin Pilletrousse. He was an honorable gentleman, as

Monsieur de Brantôme would say, and perished through a most vexatious misunderstanding. One day Monsieur de Montluc was passing through a small town, when he was complimented by the authorities, with the exception of the judges, — an incivility for which he determined to be revenged. With this intention he made inquiries, and learned that the next day judgment was to be rendered in the case of twelve Huguenots. That was all that he wished to know ; he repaired to the prison, and entering the common room he inquired as to who were Huguenots. Now, Pilletrousse, who knew that Monsieur de Montluc had been a furious Huguenot, but who did not know that, like the Baron des Adrets, he had changed his faith, chanced to be in this room charged with some crime or other ; and believing that Monsieur de Montluc asked his question with the object of setting the Huguenots free, replied that he was one. Poor fellow ! there he made a great mistake. Montluc's object was not to release the Huguenots, but to have them hanged. When poor Pilletrousse saw how matters stood, he protested with all his might ; but in vain, — they kept him to his first statement ; and he was hanged high and dry, the very last. On the next day the judges were rarely taken in, as there was no one to sentence. But in the mean time poor Pilletrousse was dead ! ”

“ *Requiescat in pace,* ” said one of the bystanders.

“ The wish is that of a good Christian, my lord, ” said the mendicant, “ and I thank you in the name of my friend. ”

“ Now let us have the eighth, ” said a voice.

“ The name of the eighth was Jean Chrysostome Procope ; he was a Norman — ”

“ The king, gentlemen, ” cried a voice.

“ Come, my good fellow, you had better be off, ” said

one of the young lords; "and try to keep out of the king's way: he likes to see pretty faces and good figures about him, and none others."

It was indeed the king, who was leaving his own apartments, with Monsieur de Guise at his right, and Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine at his left. He seemed in a very gloomy mood.

"Gentlemen," said he, addressing the courtiers who lined his route, concealing the mendicant as well as they could, "you have often heard me speak of the right royal manner in which I was received in Piedmont by Duke Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy?"

The courtiers bowed, signifying that they remembered what the king had said in regard to it.

"Well, this morning I received the sad news of his death, which occurred at Turin on the 30th of August, 1580."

"And, Sire," one of the Forty-five asked, "this great prince doubtless died in a worthy manner?"

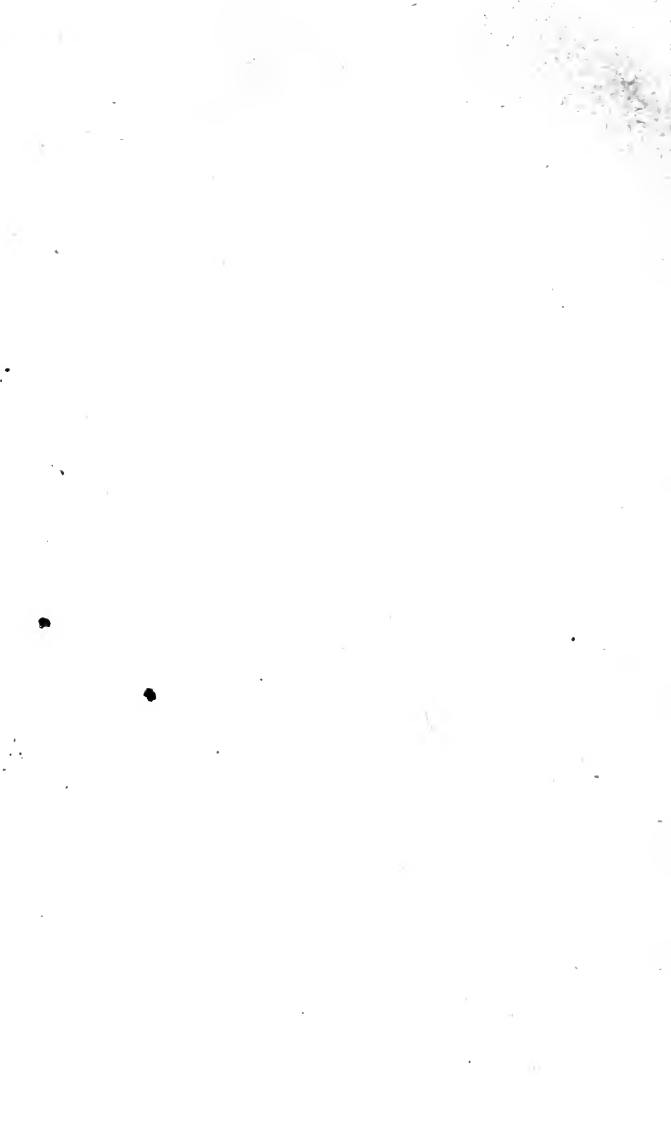
"In a manner worthy of his great name, gentlemen; he expired in the arms of his son, saying, 'My son, learn from my death what your life ought to be, and from my life what your death should be. You are now old enough to govern the dominions which I leave you: be careful to preserve them and pass them on to your successor; and rest assured that God will protect them as long as you live in his fear!' Gentlemen, Duke Emmanuel Philibert was one of my dearest friends; I shall wear mourning for eight days; and during that time Masses shall be offered for his soul, at whose celebration I shall be present. It will afford me great pleasure to have my example followed." And the king proceeded to the chapel, whither the courtiers followed him, and with him devoutly worshipped during the celebration of the Mass.

On leaving the church the young lords first of all looked around for the beggar ; but he had disappeared, and with him Sainte-Maline's purse, Montaigu's comfit-box, and Villequier's gold chain. The adventurer had but one hand ; but, as we see, he knew how to make good use of it. The three young men were anxious to know if he had made as good use of his single leg as of his single hand, and, running to the gate, asked the sentinel if he could give any information as to the whereabouts of the lame beggar with whom they had talked half an hour before.

"Gentlemen," said the trooper, "I saw him disappear behind the Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon ; and as he passed me he said very politely : 'Squire, it is possible that the noble lords with whom I have just had the honor to converse will like to know what became of my last two companions ; and they may be curious, too, as to the name of the poor devil who has survived them. My two companions, named Procope and Maldent, were both very learned in the law (the one was a Norman, the other born in Picardy) : the first died proctor in the Châtelet, the second doctor at the Sorbonne. As for myself, my name is César Annibal Malemort, at their lordships' service.'"

This was all that the Forty-five were able to learn of the last of the adventurers ; and correspondingly our own further researches have been fruitless. Fate determined that he who might have been expected to fall the first, miraculously survived all the adventurers.







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